

Turnout and Registration of Mobile European Union Citizens in European Parliament and Municipal Elections

FAIREU Analytical Report

Derek S. Hutcheson and Luana Russo



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1 Introduction

Democracy is one of the fundamental values of the European Union (EU).¹ The starting point of democracy is that it represents ‘rule of the people’. But which people should be represented? In this report, we put a particular focus on the representation of ‘mobile EU citizens’ – people holding the citizenship of one Member State who have used their freedom of movement rights to live or work in another.

Since the Maastricht Treaty, national citizens of European Union (EU) Member States (MS) have been vested with a derivative citizenship of the Union. Such citizenship gives them not only the right to move and reside freely within the EU, but also the ‘to vote and to stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament (EP) and in municipal elections in their Member State of residence, under the same conditions as nationals of that State’.²

The 14.3 million people of voting age who live in an EU country other than their own collectively form a group that is larger than the individual electorates of 21 of the 28 Member States. Though a small proportion of the overall EU population, and dispersed across the continent, residential concentration can mean that they represent a sizeable proportion of potential voters in some locations. If they cannot fully access their democratic rights, the result may be a ‘representation gap’, in which their views are systematically less represented than those of other EU citizens. In other words, mobility potentially leads to diminution of democratic participation and quality amongst the mobile citizens of the EU, unless voting rights follow.

The Treaty provisions on electoral rights, and the Directives that give them substance – 93/109/EC (EP elections) and 94/80/EC (municipal elections) – are designed to address the misalignment of national citizenship and electoral territories. They resolve it only partially. First, they concern only EP and municipal elections – leaving electoral rights in national-level elections subject to Member States’ own rules. It is entirely possible for a mobile EU citizen to end up with limited or no voting rights in any national parliament election. With the partial exception of the UK and Ireland, no EU states grant other EU citizens the right to vote in their national-level elections, and not all states allow their own citizens to vote from abroad.³ Second, Directive 93/109/EC concerns only EP voting rights of Union citizens in the country in which they live, but not relative to their country of origin. Third, even where the Directives imply an automatic right to voting rights in municipal elections, there is wide disparity in the ease with which mobile EU citizens can access these rights, and the administrative powers of the local government units to which they apply (as will be discussed below).

The Directives have been in place for a quarter of a century, but we still have remarkably little knowledge of the extent to which mobile EU voters actually use their electoral rights. It is this gap that this FAIREU report addresses. First, it looks at the scope and enactment of Directives 93/109/EC (EP elections) and 94/80/EC (municipal elections). Thereafter, it examines the available information on registration and turnout rates amongst mobile EU voters, in the most recent municipal elections and EP elections prior to 2019 in each Member State. Finally, it examines the available registration and turnout data of mobile EU voters in a selection of key countries. Based on these three levels of analysis, tentative are drawn conclusions about the participation rates of mobile EU citizens in EP and municipal elections across the EU, and policy suggestions are made based on them.

2 Scope of Directives 93/109/EC and 94/80/EC

Directive 93/109/EC (as amended) lays down detailed arrangements for mobile EU citizens to vote and stand as candidates in EP elections in their states of residence.⁴ In essence, the key provision is that mobile EU citizens should have voting and candidacy rights in their country of residence, unless deprived of their electoral rights in their home countries, if they fulfil the same criteria as the Member State ‘imposes by law on its own nationals’ (Art. 3).

This formulation is important insofar as it does not create a universal electoral standard across the Union. Voting and candidacy rights are accorded in line with national specificities. For example, the minimum voting age in Austria (and Malta, with effect from 2019) is 16 years, two years lower than in other EU states. The minimum age for candidacy varies from 18 to 25 years across the EU. Each Member State has different provisions on disenfranchisement based on criminal convictions and mental incapacity.⁵ Some states also impose residency and registration restrictions, such as a requirement for permanent as opposed to temporary residency; minimum periods of prior residency; or different procedures for registration between EU and national citizens. In Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg, voting is also compulsory once registered (at least formally). In other states, it is voluntary.⁶

Electoral rights of mobile EU citizens as external citizens in their home countries also vary widely. Directive 93/109/EC acknowledges a mobile EU citizen’s right to ‘vote and to stand as a candidate in the Member State of which the citizen is a national’ and ‘to choose the Member State in which to take part in European elections’. But it does not make this a requirement, stating explicitly that these arrangements do not impinge on the prerogative of Member States to determine their own external voting and candidacy rules. *De facto*, therefore, some mobile EU voters have a choice of whether to vote or stand for election to the European Parliament in their country of origin or of residence (with the caveat that double voting is prohibited), while others do not.

A similar formulation features in Directive 94/80/EC (as amended),⁷ in respect of mobile EU citizens’ voting and candidacy rights in municipal elections. Once again, the key point is that states may impose the same restrictions as they do *on their own nationals* (Art. 3), meaning that different rules on minimum ages, registration requirements, etc. apply from country to country.

There are two further specificities in municipal elections. The first is that the fundamental definition of ‘basic local government unit’ differs from state to state. The applicable entities vary in administrative importance and size. For example, mobile EU voters in France may vote only in elections to their local *commune* (low-level territorial divisions with on average fewer than 2,000 inhabitants), but not to larger subnational territorial units such as the 13 *régions* or 101 *départements*. At the other end of the spectrum, EU voters may vote in the highest-level territorial subdivisions in Denmark (5 *regioner*), Croatia (20 *županija*), Sweden (21 *län*) and Slovakia (8 *samosprávny kraj*), each of which can encompass several hundred thousand voters.

Second, the Directive permits (but does not require) Member States to restrict certain municipal executive offices (‘elected head, deputy or member of the governing college of the executive of a basic local government’ – Art. 5.3) to their own nationals. Thus, even if it is

possible for mobile EU citizens to vote and to be elected as municipal deputies, it is not always possible for them to exercise executive responsibility.

Successive implementation reports have indicated that there have been several obstacles to the practical application of Directive 94/80/EC, such as arbitrary minimum residence periods and failure to count time spent in other EU Member States in lieu.⁸ Over the last few years, most of these formal legal inconsistencies have been removed,⁹ but in practice there remain significant *de facto* obstacles to mobile EU citizens who wish to exercise their democratic rights in municipal and EP elections.¹⁰

Even if EU citizens have the right to vote in local and EP elections, it is unclear that anything close to a majority of them can and will. There are several ‘filters’ on participation. The first group of obstacles concerns eligibility and registration. Whereas registration on the electoral roll is automatic in most countries for native citizens, in more than half the Member States mobile EU voters are required to register themselves separately on the electoral register, even if they are already living in the country. For local elections, this is the case in 15 of the 28 EU Member States, and for EP elections, in no fewer than 25 of them.¹¹ Moreover, the definition of residency differs from state to state and in some countries requires a minimum number of months’ or years’ prior residence. In EP elections, as noted above, a majority of mobile EU citizens (but not all, depending on their country of origin) may also have the option of voting in their home country, which means that registration rates in countries of residence should be considered alongside those in countries of origin.

Second, even where voters are registered, turnout amongst non-citizens may also be lower than among native citizens. Unfamiliarity with the local political landscapes or language barriers may act as a disincentive to participation, as well as specific national rules (such as compulsory voting). The reason for a voter’s mobility may also affect his or her propensity to participate: those whose main reason for mobility is a short-term work opportunity or other temporary situation such as study may feel less commitment to vote in their country of residence than long-term mobile EU citizens who plan a long-term future there. This also draws attention to the fact that, even where the body of mobile EU citizens remains stable in size, there may be turnover in the people who comprise it from one election to the next.

We have hitherto had remarkably little empirical information on the extent to which mobile EU citizens actually do participate in local and European elections. Eurobarometer studies have suggested that general awareness of EU mobile voting rights in local and European elections has been falling in recent years – but these awareness figures are measured among the general population, not mobile EU citizens themselves.¹² The Commission’s own reports on the implementation of Directive 94/80/EC have indicated that registration and turnout rates that are much below those for native citizens – but the depth of the studies has been hampered by poor response rates from national authorities, and limited data.¹³

The current report seeks to add to the foundational work done by these reports through the compilation of a comprehensive database of registration and electoral results across EU Member States in the most recent two EP elections and the most recent municipal elections.¹⁴ It allows us to build a more comprehensive picture of registration and turnout rates amongst mobile EU citizens across Europe in local and European Parliament elections. The overall picture is of turnout rates that are universally much lower than those of national citizens in

each state. But there is wide variation, and whether this primarily manifests itself through low registration rates or low turnout rates, or a combination of the two.

Two further caveats are in order before continuing. First, there are many categories of foreign-born or foreign-background voters, but the current report has a narrow focus primarily on ‘mobile EU citizens’ – people who hold the citizenship of an EU state other than the one they live in, but do not hold the citizenship of their state of residence. Some foreign-born people may be citizens of their country of residence (e.g., through naturalisation or derivatively from birth) – but in electoral statistics they are usually counted as part of the resident citizenry, rather than as mobile EU citizens. Relevant distinctions should therefore be made between ‘foreign-born’, ‘foreign citizen’ and ‘non-citizen’. There may also be other electoral levels apart from EP and basic municipal elections in which non-national EU citizens or non-EU citizens have voting rights - but these are afforded by national-specific legislation. Our focus in this report is primarily on those whose voting rights in municipal and EP elections derive directly from their status as EU citizens from another EU country, through the application of EU law.

Second, the report focuses on active electoral rights – the uptake of the right to vote. This is not to deny the importance of passive electoral rights for mobile EU citizens (the right to stand as a candidate), which are covered in other parts of the FAIREU and previous projects.¹⁵ But this report primarily focuses on registration and turnout rates among mobile EU voters in EP and municipal elections across the Union.

3 The FAIREU database on turnout

3.1 Methodology

In order to assess the participation of mobile EU citizens in municipal and EP elections, a database was constructed for the most recent municipal elections prior to 1 January 2019 to which Directive 94/80/EC applied, and also to the two most recent EP elections prior to the May 2019 contest (2009 and 2014, except in Croatia where the first EP election took place in 2013). The 2019 EP election is not systematically included in the database, as not all states had officially finalised and published their definitive results and/or deep-level breakdowns of registration and turnout, at the time of going to press. Where relevant details are known from the provisional results, they are included in the country reports in section 4.

Whereas the Commission's reports on participation rates focus on questionnaire returns from national authorities,¹⁶ the database used for the current report prioritises publicly-available official sources of electoral information, supplemented with other reliable and verifiable data (including queries to national authorities).

For each election, the following sources of information were sought in order of priority. First, registration and turnout figures for the election in general were identified. Thereafter, specific registration and turnout data for mobile EU citizens were sought. The unavailability of data through one source of information led to the continuation of the search through the next level of enquiry:

- official data in the public domain (e.g., official results from electoral commissions and parliamentary documents);
- Publicly available research data from reputable academic studies;¹⁷
- Links to official figures from reputable secondary sources (e.g., European Commission implementation report summaries, press releases and newspaper articles based on official data which itself is no longer available);¹⁸
- Approaches via FAIREU country experts to national authorities, with formal freedom of information requests;
- Direct approaches from the current authors to national authorities, with informal freedom of information requests or requests for clarifications.
- Gaps in data are filled in from the findings of the FAIREU country experts as presented in the project's country reports.¹⁹

The data utilised are listed in a separate database available on the FAIREU website.²⁰

3.2 Scope of inventory

The data cover the 2009 and 2014 European Parliament election in all EU Member States and the most recent municipal elections prior to 1 January 2019. Our focus is on voting rather than on candidacy. For both EP and municipal elections, the criteria for inclusion were:

- Legislative elections
- Mobile EU citizens entitled to vote in the election in their country of residence, under the provisions of Directives 93/109/EC (EP elections) or 94/80/EC (municipal elections)
- Participation in voting (active electoral rights).

For maximum comparability, the focus in the database is on municipal *legislative* elections, as such bodies exist in every EU Member State, and mobile EU citizens are granted the franchise to them through Directive 94/80/EC. In some countries, mobile EU citizens can also vote in other forms of local government elections – for example, mayoral contests. Such electoral rights vary from country to country and also reflect differences in local government structures, but are not universal across the EU.

In some countries, national legislation on voting rights goes beyond the inclusiveness requirements of Directive 94/80/EC. Twelve EU states (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and Sweden; plus Spain, Portugal and the UK for selected nationalities) give voting rights to third-country citizens (TCCs) as well as EU citizens in municipal elections, albeit typically after much longer waiting periods or only by reciprocity. In the database, our focus has been on mobile EU citizens only, except where no distinction is made in the registration data between different categories of non-national voters (such as in Sweden, which simply records the number of ‘non-Swedish’ voters without geographical breakdown of nationality).

Data were assembled or calculated for each election in respect of the following parameters, where available:

- Registration:
 - absolute number of mobile EU voters registered.
 - proportion of registered EU electorate relative to the overall electorate (share of electorate).
 - proportion of registered EU electorate relative to mobile EU citizens of voting age (registration rate).

- Turnout
 - Absolute number of mobile EU citizens actually voting.
 - Proportion of EU voters relative to the number of registered mobile EU citizens (turnout as % of registered EU voters).
 - Proportion of EU voters relative to the total number of EU citizens of voting age (registered and non-registered) (turnout as % of eligible EU voters).

As explained further in section 2.3, not all countries had equally comprehensive data, and in some cases it was not possible to ascertain with accuracy the registration or turnout rates.

As a methodological point, ‘turnout’ is not defined identically in each country’s electoral legislation. For the purposes of comparison, it has generally been calculated as the number of ballot papers given out (if this is different from the number of ballot papers in urns), relative to the registered electorate. In this definition, invalid ballot papers are included (on the basis that these are still cast by people who have turned out to vote, even if they are discounted from final results). This may lead to minor deviations between official turnout rates calculated according to national specificities, and this uniform measure. ‘Registration rates’ are defined according to the denominator of eligible people who could in principle register – which sometimes involves a degree of estimation where it concerns populations of non-citizens in decentralised countries (see sections 2.3 and 3.1).

The database comprises turnout data on the 2009 and 2014 European Parliament elections for each available country, and the most recent municipal elections to which Directive 94/80/EC applied, held prior to 1 January 2019. The list of elections included is given in table 1.

Table 1: List of most recent municipal elections to which Directive 94/80/EC applied, prior to 1 January 2019

Code	Country name	Election date	Local government level
AT	Austria	Various	Gemeinden
BE	Belgium	14/10/2018	Commune/Gemeente/Gemeinde
BG	Bulgaria	25/10/2015	Obshtina
BG	Bulgaria	01/11/2015	Obshtina (2 nd round)
CY	Cyprus	18/12/2016	Δήμοι (Dimoi) – Municipalities
CZ	Czech Republic	05/10/2018	Obec
DE	Germany	Various	Gemeinde
DE	Germany	Various	Kreise/Kreisfreie Städte/Gemeinde
DK	Denmark	21/11/2017	Kommuner
DK	Denmark	21/11/2017	Regioner
EE	Estonia	15/10/2017	Linnad/vallad
EL	Greece	18/05/2014	Δήμοι (Dimoi) – Municipalities
ES	Spain	24/05/2015	Municipio
FI	Finland	09/04/2017	Kuntaa/kommuner
FR	France	23/03/2014	Commune
FR	France	30/03/2014	Commune (2nd round)
HR	Croatia	21/05/2017	Općina/grad
HR	Croatia	21/05/2017	Županija (counties)
HR	Croatia	04/06/2017	Općina/grad (2nd round)
HR	Croatia	04/06/2017	Županija (counties) (2nd round)
HU	Hungary	12/10/2014	Települések (communities)
IE	Ireland	23/05/2014	County (26), city (3) + city & county (2)
IT	Italy	25/05/2014	Comune (selected regions)
IT	Italy	30/05/2015	Comune (selected regions)
IT	Italy	05/06/2016	Comune (selected regions)
IT	Italy	11/06/2017	Comune (selected regions)
IT	Italy	10/06/2018	Comune (selected regions)
LT	Lithuania	01/03/2015	Savivaldybė
LT	Lithuania	15/03/2015	Savivaldybė (2nd round)
LU	Luxembourg	08/10/2017	Commune
LV	Latvia	03/06/2017	Novadi (municipalities) (110) + republikas pilsētas (republican cities) (9)
MT	Malta	11/04/2015	Kunsill lokali
NL	Netherlands	21/03/2018	Gemeente
PL	Poland	21/10/2018	Gmina
PL	Poland	04/11/2018	Gmina (2nd round)
PT	Portugal	01/10/2017	Assembleia de Freguesia
PT	Portugal	01/10/2017	Assembleia Municipal
PT	Portugal	01/10/2017	Câmara Municipal

RO	Romania	05/06/2016	Comune/orașe
RO	Romania	19/06/2016	Comune/orașe (2nd round)
SE	Sweden	09/09/2018	Kommun
SE	Sweden	09/09/2018	Län
SI	Slovenia	18/11/2018	Občine
SI	Slovenia	02/12/2018	Občine (2nd round)
SK	Slovakia	04/11/2017	Samosprávny kraj
SK	Slovakia	10/11/2018	Obec; mesto; mestská časť
UK	United Kingdom	Various	counties in England; counties, county boroughs and communities in Wales; regions and Islands in Scotland; districts in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland; London boroughs; parishes in England; the City of London in relation to ward elections for common councilmen.

Key: ISO/EU country codes.

In the majority of Member States, elections to municipal authorities are held simultaneously across the whole country on the same day, at regular intervals. In some cases (for example, Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom (UK)), municipal elections are held on different cycles in different parts of the country. In Germany, there have been several exceptions made to these term limits to create a gradual convergence in the majority of the federal states between municipal and European Parliament electoral cycles.

3.3 Brief observations on data quality

Although this study arguably represents the most systematic attempt hitherto to map electoral registration and turnout rates among mobile EU citizens in municipal and European Parliament elections, it is still not completely exhaustive. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, electoral commissions often do not publish more than a general summary of registration and turnout numbers for the whole electorate. It is generally possible to ascertain overall registration and turnout statistics – but relatively rare for published registration and turnout figures to be disaggregated further by citizenship, gender, age or other demographic factors.

Second, the availability of registration/turnout data specifically on mobile EU citizens is particularly patchy. When a breakdown by citizenship status does exist, it is more usual to be found for registration figures than turnout data, for reasons explained below.

Only in a few cases (e.g., Bulgaria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Spain, Sweden) are official registration rates published with a clear differentiation between national and non-national citizens, particularly in municipal elections. Even then, the figures are sometimes only published at polling station level (e.g., in Bulgaria and Poland) rather than collated nationally; and they do not always distinguish EU and non-EU ‘foreign voters’ in general.

Even when EU citizens are demarcated from national citizens in electoral registers, it is unusual for published figures to give a breakdown of these voters by nationality. Only for a handful of countries (Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, and Spain) were such data available in respect of municipal elections; plus Austria, Estonia and Romania for

European Parliament elections. Even then, generally the numbers were found only in longer analytical reports (rather than tabular electoral results), through secondary analysis (e.g., register-based academic studies in Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain) or through data available from freedom of information requests (e.g., Belgium and Cyprus). In the main, however, we know very little about the individual countries from which mobile voters EU hail.

For countries where external voting is possible in European Parliament elections, the breakdown of resident and non-resident voters is not always made clear in each country's electoral statistics, nor the countries in which people voted.

A final problem is that in some cases different official documents may contradict each other or contain slightly different information.²¹ This means that a value judgement sometimes has to be taken as to which of two different 'official' figures is the more accurate, even if the differences are sometimes minor. In the case of turnout and registration data, generally the more detailed of the two has been used – unless it clearly predates the less detailed but possibly more definitive one.

Having identified some of the drawbacks of available data, we can briefly note the most common causes of them:

- **Registration procedures.** Voter registration is often administered at municipal or district level, which causes difficulties of data aggregation, particularly for external voters (who are dispersed across the whole country's electoral registers). In highly decentralised states (such as the federal countries of Austria and Germany, and the UK), it is particularly difficult to keep track of mobile EU voter turnout and external voting.²²
- **Lack of public data.** In several countries, registration rates for mobile EU voters are not published. For some, such as the UK, the data are simply not available.²³ Other countries aggregate data privately, but do not publicly release it except by request or to official bodies. Formal or informal freedom of information requests by the current authors or the network of FAIREU country experts obtained aggregate-level figures for Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Cyprus that were not otherwise in the public domain.
- A particular lack of **turnout data availability**:
 - In some cases, once the qualification to enter the list of eligible voters for a particular election has been established, no further distinction is maintained on the electoral list between different categories of voter, on the basis that all are equally entitled to vote – making it impossible to differentiate their turnout rates.
 - In other countries (such as the UK), turnout is recorded on voter lists manually. Theoretically it would be possible to go through the marked registers and make a manual count by type of voter, but it would require an army of researchers to examine each page of each marked paper register for every municipality – an impossible logistical task.²⁴

- Different national electoral requirements on how to record/report official election results mean that the distinction between EU and national citizens is reported in some countries, but not in others.

4 Comparative rate of participation: an overview

In this section, we summarise the available information on registration and turnout rates in the most recent municipal elections prior to 2019, and in the 2009 and 2014 European Parliament elections.

As the literature has widely debated, European Parliament elections are not quite comparable with municipal (and national) ones for several theoretical reasons.²⁵ We know from academic literature that turnout levels vary substantially according to the type of election, and normally European countries show higher turnout rates in national elections rather than in local and European elections.²⁶ Although both local and municipal elections are considered to be ‘second-order’ to national contests, local elections generally have higher levels of turnout than European Parliament ones.²⁷ The 2019 European Parliament election was the first ever to record an increase in the average turnout rate compared with the preceding one.²⁸

Despite this empirical limitation, investigation of EU citizens’ registration and turnout rates is crucial. In fact, as shown by Gaus and Seubert, ‘low turnout is related to social inequality of voting. Socially weak EU-citizens are overrepresented in the group of non-voters’.²⁹ Whilst the lack of individual-level data in the present study means that our focus is primarily on analysing turnout comparatively rather than on engaging in causal investigation, it is worth bearing in mind that the under-representation of mobile EU citizens is potentially a democratic problem if their interests and concerns differ from those of other voters.

4.1 Municipal elections 2014-18

As noted above, the data have been combined from numerous official sources and represent the best estimates available. The number of EU citizens of voting age (from which registration rates are calculated) is estimated from Eurostat data, except in a few cases where other figures are verifiably more accurate.³⁰

Table 2 shows headline registration rates for the most recent municipal elections in each EU country prior to 2019. It is arranged in order of registration rates, as a proportion of those eligible.

In the countries with automatic registration, registration is at or close to 100 per cent of the eligible population of mobile EU voters. This is in sharp contrast to countries where registration is voluntary, where the highest registration rate (in Spain) is only 26 per cent. Registration rates are particularly low in the Czech Republic (where only 2 per cent of voting-age mobile EU citizens are registered to vote), Bulgaria, Poland and Greece. Bulgaria also has the smallest cohort of EU citizens on the electoral register, with only 414 individuals across the entire country able to vote in its 2015 local elections.

Unfortunately, we cannot follow the behaviour of all 14.3 million mobile EU citizens in municipal elections, since some of the countries for which detailed data on mobile EU registration figures are lacking are also those with some of the largest populations of non-native mobile EU citizens (particularly Germany and the UK). But focusing on the 21 countries for which registration data are available, the official figures allow us to find electoral registrations in their countries of residence for 2.2 million mobile EU citizens, out of around 6.8 million who could potentially be eligible in these countries.

Table 2: Registration rates amongst mobile EU citizens, most recent municipal elections (2014-18)

Country	Estimated mobile EU population of voting age	Registered EU voters	Registered as % of mobile EU voting age population
LV Latvia	5,386	15,053	279.5%
HU Hungary	74,184	108,994	146.9%
SI Slovenia	17,579	20,510	116.7%
FI Finland	81,051	81,051	100.0%
MT Malta	14,021	14,021	100.0%
RO Romania	40,846	40,846	100.0%
SE Sweden	535,857	535,857*	100.0%
SK Slovakia	67,768	67,768*	100.0%
LT Lithuania	4,870	4,524	92.9%
DK Denmark***	173,480	157,879	91.0%
ES Spain	1,703,466	442,127	26.0%
FR France	1,250,364	278,000	22.2%
CY Cyprus	92,962	16,740	18.0%
BE Belgium	748,267	130,559	17.4%
LU Luxembourg	192,603	31,288	16.2%
IT Italy**	1,246,321	182,337	14.6%
PT Portugal	106,819	12,992	12.2%
EL Greece	163,855	19,102	11.7%
PL Poland	27,464	1,845	6.7%
BG Bulgaria	11,779	414	3.5%
CZ Czech Republic	202,222	4,038	2.0%
AT Austria	542,968	-	-
DE Germany	3,484,779	-	-
EE Estonia	14,944	-	-
HR Croatia	13,760	-	-
IE Ireland	342,722	-	-
NL Netherlands	420,842	-	-
UK United Kingdom	2,921,319	-	-

Source: Multiple official sources³¹

Notes:

*Figures refer to all non-national electorate, not just EU voters

**Figures for Italy reflect registration details from 2016 – not a particular municipal election

***Figures for Denmark are for 91 out of 98 municipalities.

Table 3: Electoral weight of mobile EU voters (registered and potential), municipal elections 2014-18

Country	Total population >18 years (millions)	EU citizens as % of population >18 years	Registered EU voters as % of all voters	Difference: EU citizens' proportion of population >18 years and of registered electorate (as % of pop.)
LU Luxembourg	0.5	40.6%	10.97%	-29.6%
CY Cyprus	0.7	13.7%	-	-
IE Ireland	3.5	9.9%	-	-
BE Belgium	9.1	8.2%	1.60%	-6.6%
AT Austria	7.4	7.3%	-	-
SE Sweden*	8.0	6.7%	7.15%	0.4%
UK United Kingdom	51.9	5.6%	-	-
DE Germany	69.0	5.1%	-	-
ES Spain	38.1	4.5%	1.26%	-3.2%
MT Malta	0.4	3.9%	7.09%	3.2%
DK Denmark	4.6	3.8%	3.47%	-0.3%
NL Netherlands	13.8	3.1%	-	-
IT Italy**	50.7	2.5%	-	-
FR France	51.4	2.4%	0.61%	-1.8%
CZ Czech Republic	8.7	2.3%	0.05%	-2.3%
HU Hungary	3.5	2.1%	1.33%	-0.8%
FI Finland	4.4	1.8%	1.85%	0.0%
EL Greece	9.0	1.8%	0.19%	-1.6%
SK Slovakia*	4.4	1.5%	1.51%	0.0%
EE Estonia	1.1	1.4%	-	-
PT Portugal	8.5	1.3%	0.14%	-1.1%
SI Slovenia	1.7	1.0%	1.21%	0.2%
HR Croatia	3.4	0.4%	-	-
LV Latvia	1.6	0.3%	1.04%	0.7%
RO Romania	16.0	0.3%	0.22%	0.0%
LT Lithuania	2.4	0.2%	0.23%	0.0%
BG Bulgaria	6.0	0.2%	0.01%	-0.2%
PL Poland	31.1	0.1%	0.01%	-0.1%

Sources/key: as table 2

What is the 'electoral weight' of mobile EU citizens in each country? Table 3 – arranged in order of the voting-age mobile EU population – casts light on this. Looking at the registered voters of all types, mobile EU citizens have least influence in Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Greece, where they accounted for less than 0.2 per cent of all people on the electoral rolls in the most recent municipal elections prior to 2019. At the other end of the scale, Luxembourg not unexpectedly has the highest proportion of mobile EU citizens amongst its electorate, accounting for around 11 per cent of all registered voters, followed by Sweden, Malta and Denmark, where they comprised 3 to 7 per cent of the registered electorate.³²

The number of mobile EU voters can be compared with population statistics to indicate in which countries they are over- and under-represented in the electoral process. In a few countries – Hungary, Romania, Denmark, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania and Slovenia – the proportion of mobile EU voters as a share of the electorate is approximately in line with their share of the population, with some small variations. At the other end of the scale, mobile EU voters are statistically under-weighted in the countries with very low registration rates such as the Bulgaria and Poland (which have relatively few mobile EU citizens in the first place) and the Czech Republic, Greece and Portugal (which have more resident EU citizens but relatively few who are registered to vote). Of particular interest are the states with relatively large foreign populations, but fairly low registration rates – which means that the interests of the mobile EU voters are particularly under-represented in determining municipal affairs. In Luxembourg, the combination of a 5-year residence restriction (see section 4.1.2 below) and low rates of voluntary registration mean that mobile EU voters, even though they comprise 11 per cent of the registered electorate, are still substantially under-represented compared with the 40 per cent of the population that they comprise. A similar situation exists in Belgium, where mobile EU citizens are 8.6 per cent of the population but only 1.6 per cent of the electorate, underweighting them by a factor of five. In France, mobile EU citizens comprise 2.4 per cent of the population but only 0.6 per cent of the electorate.

Table 4: Turnout rates of EU mobile voters, municipal elections 2014-18

Countries	Registered EU voters	EU turnout	Turnout as % of EU registered	Turnout as % of EU eligible	Overall election turnout (all voters)
CY Cyprus	16,740	10,977	65.6%	11.8%	-
DK Denmark	157,879	41,295	26.2%	23.8%	70.8%
FI Finland	81,051	14,252	17.6%	17.6%	58.9%
PL Poland	1,845	1,381	74.9%	5.0%	55.2%
RO Romania	40,846	1,713	4.2%	4.2%	48.2%

Sources: Multiple official sources

Data on actual turnout rates (as opposed to registration rates) are less common, for the reasons outlined in section 2. Table 4 presents the turnout figures for a selection of countries where turnout by citizenship is recorded separately. Where registration is voluntary and requires bureaucratic hurdles to be overcome, the majority of voters who enter the electoral roll then go on to vote. In the three countries in table 4 that have automatic registration, the turnout rates amongst registered voters are much lower.

To take account of the different methods of registration and the self-selection involved, the registration rate relative to the voting-age population of mobile citizens can be used as a comparable indicator. Table 4 shows that the overall turnout rates as a proportion of those who could potentially have voted were higher in Denmark and Finland (which had automatic registration) than in Cyprus and Malta (which had active registration) – but that the reverse was true in Romania. Registration is clearly not the only hurdle to participation – but complicated registration procedures can act as a ‘filter’ that removes all but the most active members of the electorate at an early stage. Systems of automatic registration, by contrast, are less exclusive before the election, but do not guarantee that overall participation will be higher.

4.2 European Parliament elections 2009 and 2014

Table 5 shows the registration rates of mobile EU citizens in the European Parliament elections of 2009 and 2014. For each election, the figures show the estimated number of mobile EU citizens of voting age; the best estimate (from official figures) of the number of voters from other EU states registered to vote in that country; and the relative proportion of the total voting-age mobile EU population. As outlined in section 1, many but not all nationalities have the option of voting either in their country of residence, or of origin. Thus it is to be expected that registration rates will be lower in European Parliament than in municipal elections. Moreover, in most countries, registration procedures for European Parliament elections either involve opting-in, or, once registered, having the option to opt out again if choosing to take up electoral rights in the country of origin.

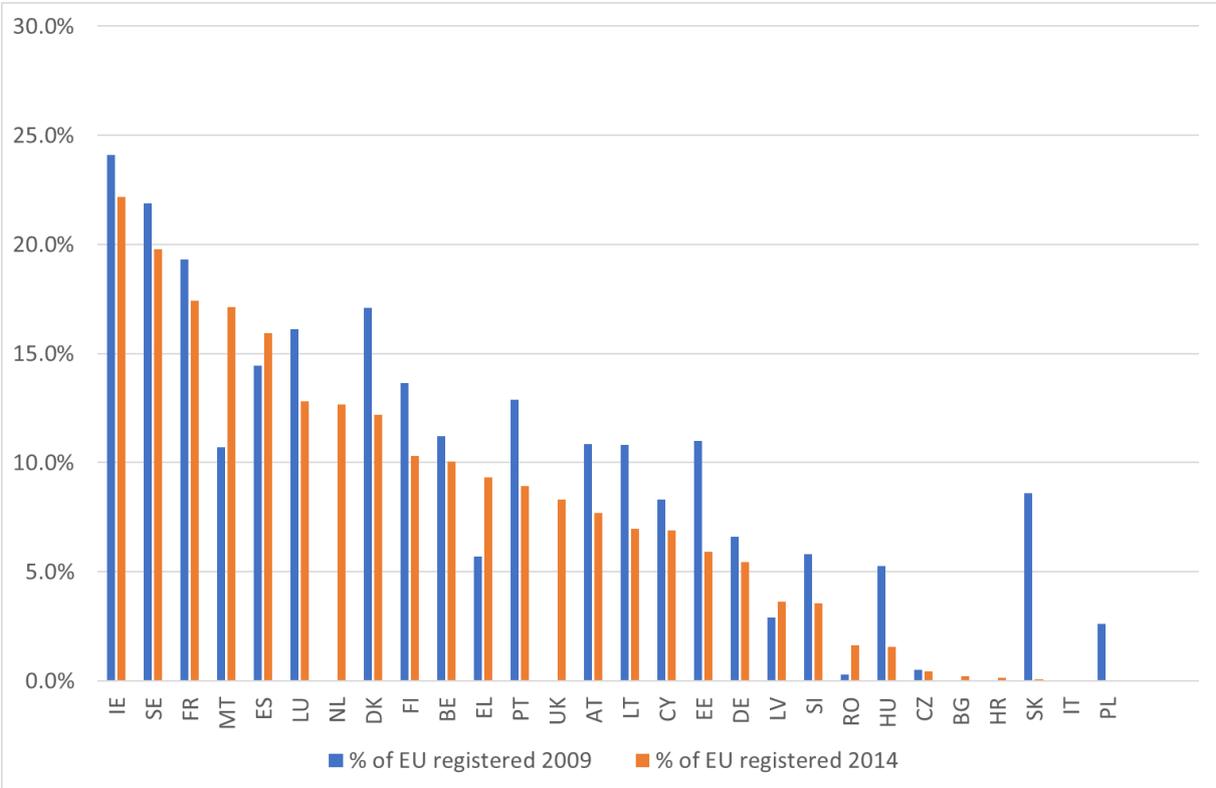
Table 5: Registration rates, resident mobile EU citizens, European Parliament elections 2009 and 2014

Country	2009			2014		
	Resident EU citizens >18 years	Resident EU citizens registered	Registration rate (%)	Resident EU citizens >18 years	Resident EU citizens registered	Registration rate (%)
AT Austria	280,000	30,393	10.9%	431,173	33,184	7.7%
BE Belgium	592,380	66,343	11.2%	684,306	68,771	10.0%
BG Bulgaria	-	115	-	26,590	55	0.2%
CY Cyprus	77,697	6,449	8.3%	112,012	7,712	6.9%
CZ Cz. Republic	139,192	696	0.5%	164,644	689	0.4%
DE Germany	2,142,810	141,425	6.6%	3,168,638	172,110	5.4%
DK Denmark	97,919	16,744	17.1%	130,631	15,940	12.2%
EE Estonia	8,649	951	11.0%	20,130	1,191	5.9%
EL Greece	114,377	6,519	5.7%	140,520	13,098	9.3%
ES Spain	1,970,778	284,443	14.4%	2,119,647	337,748	15.9%
FI Finland	45,536	6,211	13.6%	71,120	7,333	10.3%
FR France	1,156,209	223,148	19.3%	1,406,700	245,063	17.4%
HR Croatia	-	-	-	5,293	8	0.2%
HU Hungary	105,648	5,542	5.2%	104,822	1,619	1.5%
IE Ireland	303,865	73,216	24.1%	323,460	71,735	22.2%
IT Italy	-	65,904	-	1,287,200	-	0.0%
LT Lithuania	3,278	354	10.8%	3,993	278	7.0%
LU Luxembourg	107,691	17,340	16.1%	168,984	21,650	12.8%
LV Latvia	8,577	249	2.9%	8,967	326	3.6%
MT Malta	19,504	2,087	10.7%	45,917	7,868	17.1%
NL Netherlands	241,495	-	-	380,600	48,169	12.7%
PL Poland	14,003	364	2.6%	24,495	-	0.0%
PT Portugal	84,727	10,930	12.9%	100,597	8,981	8.9%
RO Romania	28,273	84	0.3%	36,293	592	1.6%
SE Sweden	221,237	48,413	21.9%	248,066	49,092	19.8%
SI Slovenia	1,426	83	5.8%	18,806	668	3.6%
SK Slovakia	6,871	591	8.6%	55,900	33	0.1%
UK United K'dom	1,043,629	-	-	1,921,000	160,000	8.3%

Source: Multiple official sources (see table 2 for notes)

Having said that, there are a number of pertinent observations to be made about the figures in table 5. First, registration rates are universally low and even more so than in municipal elections. Second, registration rates were generally slightly lower in 2014 than in 2009 – contrary to the expectation that participation might increase over time as people become more aware of their rights and European Parliament elections gain in profile. The highest mobile EU voter registration rate was in Ireland on both occasions, where the registration rate was around 22 to 24 per cent of those eligible. In other words, three out of four mobile EU voters were not registered to vote even in the country with the highest registration rate, and in the majority of countries fewer than one in ten mobile EU citizens was registered to vote. This is illustrated graphically in figure 1.

Figure 1: Registration rates amongst mobile EU citizens (% of voting-age mobile EU citizens resident in country), European Parliament elections, 2009 and 2014



Sources: Authors’ calculations based on multiple official sources (as table 5)

In the new Member States, registration of resident EU citizens is so low as to be almost insignificant. Croatia, Slovakia and Bulgaria, for instance, had only 8, 33 and 55 resident mobile EU citizens on their electoral registers across the entire countries in the 2014 European Parliament elections.³³ In several of the other new Member States – most notably Lithuania, Latvia, Romania and the Czech Republic – only a few hundred mobile EU citizens were registered to vote. Admittedly the new Member States generally have fewer mobile EU citizens in the first place – but these seven countries had around 300,000 resident mobile EU citizens of voting age among them, indicating a particularly low level of engagement in EP elections amongst their resident mobile EU citizens.

The registration rates amongst resident mobile EU voters present only part of the story of mobile EU voters in European Parliament elections. As noted above, in 23 of the 28 states it is possible to choose to vote as an external voter relative to one’s country of citizenship, rather than as an EU citizen in the country of residence. (In the 2009 European Parliament election in Romania, for example, there were only 56 Community voters registered, but 89,373 Romanians indicated an intention to vote in other EU states.³⁴)

There are limits on how easy it is to establish participation rates for such external citizens, however. Many countries’ records of their own external citizens are patchy. Some countries (most notably Romania and Estonia) use the total number of votes cast abroad as the only record of the number of external electors, giving an official turnout of 100 per cent among them. Since it seems highly unlikely that this represents the sum total of all external citizens, it only makes sense to examine turnout rates by external citizens only for countries that use the number of registered non-resident citizens (rather than votes cast) as their starting points. Table 6 shows turnout rates among external citizens for a selection of such countries, indicating that around 4-11 per cent of external mobile EU voters cast ballots from their countries of residence back to their countries of citizenship in 2014.

Table 6: Turnout rates, non-resident citizens (mobile EU voters), European Parliament election 2014

	Country	Registered external voters (N)	Turnout (N)	% turnout
FI	Finland	222,216	9,614	4.3%
FR	France	1,063,607	117,422	11.0%
IT	Italy	1,406,291	83,254	5.9%
PT	Portugal	244,986	5,129	2.1%
SI	Slovenia	70,170	7,183	10.2%

Source: as table 5

Another way of measuring the participation of non-resident citizens is by comparing the data from national electoral commission notifications about double-registered voters. Theoretically, the country of origin is supposed to delete the voter from their electoral register when notified by the country of residence that an EU citizen has been registered in their country of residence. In total, around 600,000 such notifications were made in 2014 across the EU28 – but the success of the cross-referencing was extremely patchy, with less than half able to be identified by their home country’s national authorities, and many exchanges of data that were incomplete or too late.³⁵

5 Key country studies

The headline figures presented in section 3 give a useful comparative overview of the turnout of mobile EU citizens across Europe, but they do not allow us to investigate what factors correlate with lower or higher turnout. For example, does it make a difference what nationalities the mobile EU voters hold? Are there any gender differences in turnout patterns? Does it matter how long the EU citizens have lived in the country?

The data on these issues is very patchy at a pan-European level, as noted in section 2. Only in a few states is it possible to obtain more detailed information that allows us to analyse differences by age, gender, nationality, time of residence in the country, etc. These data are not equally comprehensive for each state, nor are they prepared with the same methodologies or categories. Taken on a case-by-case basis and cross-referenced, however, they expand our understanding of the political participation of mobile EU citizens in European Parliament and municipal elections.

This section examines in more detail the available data on registration and turnout in several key states that represent different parts of the EU. First, we examine two of the original EU states – Belgium and Luxembourg – that have detailed registration data and also feature compulsory voting. Second, some of the other ‘old’ Member States are examined, including Spain and the Nordic countries, where the combination of official data and survey research allows a uniquely detailed examination of participation amongst mobile EU citizens. Finally, a selection of new Member States – where participation rates of mobile EU citizens are generally very low – are analysed.

5.1 Selected old Member States

5.1.1 Belgium

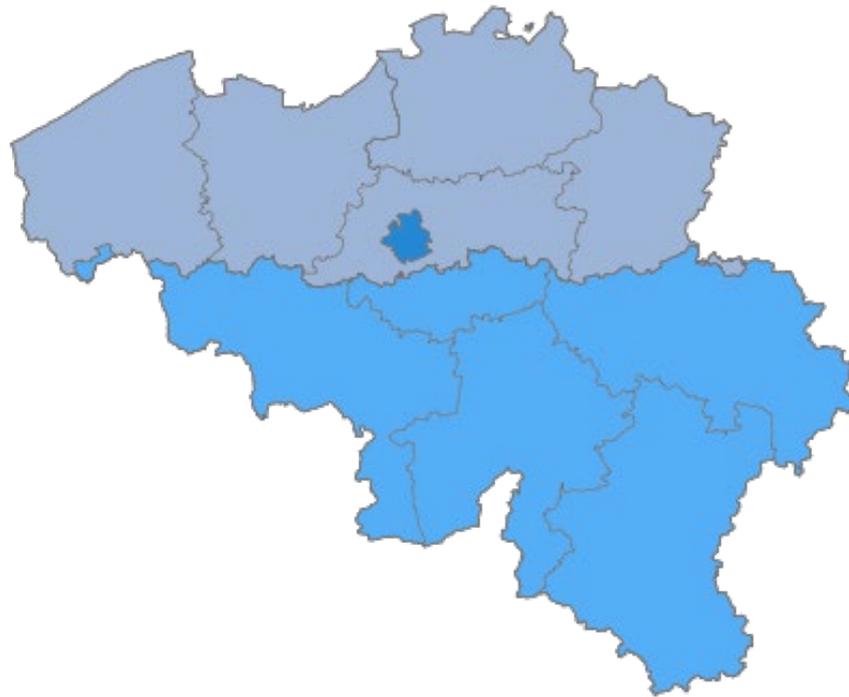
Belgium is a very interesting case to investigate for several reasons – not just because it is the main location of the EU institutions and was one of the founder Member States.

First of all, registration for mobile EU non-Belgian citizens is not automatic but completely voluntary, and it has to be done at the municipality of residence. Voters register only once – and then they remain registered for all upcoming elections, unless they decide to de-register. Because of the compulsory voting requirement, voters are compelled to vote once registered.³⁶ The combination of voluntary (and complicated) registration, combined with the compulsion to vote thereafter, means that registration can be in practice be assumed to approximate to actual turnout.

Second, Belgium collects the registration data by municipality and makes them publicly available. Thus, it is a privileged case study to understand patterns of EU citizen’s participation in municipal and European elections.

In the analysis below, we will focus on the two most recent municipal elections, held respectively in 2012 and in 2018, and on the 2014 European election. In particular, given that Belgium is a federal country composed of three regions (characterized also by a language divide that further divides the country into linguistic communities),³⁷ we will pay special attention to regional differences in patterns of participation. These regions – Brussels (dark blue), Flanders (grey-blue) and Wallonia (light blue) – are shown in figure 2, together with the internal provincial boundaries.

Figure 2: Regions in Belgium



Map: Luana Russo

5.1.1.1 Municipal elections

Registration for non-Belgian citizens is voluntary in municipal elections, and EU citizens are in principle eligible for full electoral rights (both active and passive). In overall terms, Brussels contains the largest group of EU mobile citizens (making up a third of the population in some municipalities such as Ixelles), though there are also large concentrations along the border regions in both Flanders and Wallonia. Additionally, third-country citizens with more than five years of residence may register to vote – but unlike EU and Belgian citizens, they cannot stand as candidates.

Belgium's municipal elections take place every six years in the country's 589 municipalities. The most recent elections were held on 14 October 2012 and 14 October 2018. Unlike Belgian citizens (who are registered automatically from population registers), EU and third-country national voters must register actively. The last date for registration amongst non-Belgian citizens was 1 August of the respective years. This early date – before the election campaigns had begun in earnest – has been cited as one contributory factor to low registration rates in Belgium amongst mobile EU voters and other foreign citizens. Others include lack of information; variable quality of local officials in charge of promoting electoral registration; fears by mobile EU voters about needing to commit to voting long in advance of polling day, because of compulsory voting; and the short-term nature of many EU citizens' stays in Belgium.³⁸

Table 7 offers a detailed overview of the registration rate of EU citizens in the 2012 and 2018 Belgian municipal elections. Fewer than one in five eligible EU citizens was actually registered to vote in 2012 and 2018. Although the absolute number was slightly higher in

2018 than in 2012, this actually represented a smaller proportion of the eligible mobile EU electorate.

Table 7: Registration rates, EU citizens, municipal elections 2018, Belgium

Variable	Total 2012	Total 2018	Difference, 2018-2012	% of eligible registered 2012	% of eligible registered 2018	Change in % registration rate
All eligible	653,958	748,267	94,309			
All registered	120,826	130,559	9,733	18.5%	17.4%	-1.0%
<i>of which:</i>						
women eligible	319,077	365,160	46,083			
women registered	57,566	63,921	6,355	18.0%	17.5%	-0.5%
men eligible	334,881	383,107	48,226			
men registered	63,260	66,638	3,378	18.9%	17.4%	-1.5%

Source: Direction des Elections (2018)³⁹

Across the country, the registration rate did not differ much between EU men and women on either occasion. The registration rate was slightly higher amongst men than women in 2012, but this gap vanished (and was very slightly reversed) in 2018.

Table 8: Registration rates by region, municipal elections 2012 and 2018, Belgium

	EU registration rate 2012	EU registration rate 2018	Change 2012-18	Male EU registration rate 2018	Female EU registration rate 2018	Difference
Flemish region	13.9%	11.7%	-2.2%	11.7%	11.5%	0.2%
Wallonia Region	27.2%	25.6%	-1.6%	25.6%	25.1%	0.5%
Brussels-Capital Region	13.6%	16.4%	2.8%	16.4%	17.1%	-0.8%
Belgium (total)	18.5%	17.4%	-1.1%	17.5%	17.4%	-0.1%

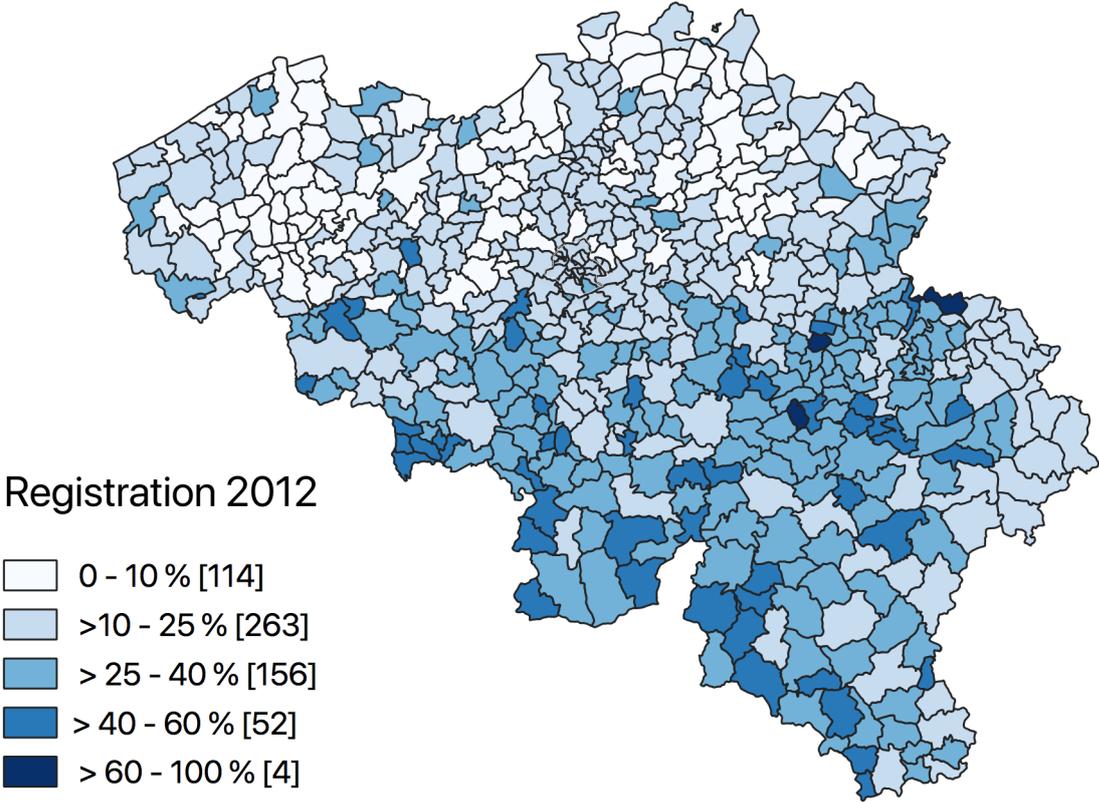
Source: Direction des Elections (2018); FAIREU Country Report (2018)⁴⁰

A more nuanced picture is obtained when looking at the three regions separately, as shown in table 8. There was a slight geographical difference in registration rates by gender in Belgium's three regions, which cancelled themselves out across the country overall. However, seen in the overall context that more than four out of five eligible electors were not registered at all, these differences of less than 1 per cent were very slight.

There was considerably geographical variation in the proportion of EU voters who registered overall, however. In both elections, the registration rate in Wallonia was much higher than in the rest of the country, double the rate of Flanders. Notwithstanding this, in 2018 the registration rate actually fell in Wallonia and Flanders compared with 2012 – suggesting that voter knowledge of how to access their vote is not increasing over time. By contrast with the rest of the country, registration increased by nearly 3 percentage points in Brussels, where it

had previously been lowest. It is worth noting that there was a concerted EU voter mobilization project in central Brussels (the *VoteBrussels* campaign, part of the FAIREU project), which may have contributed to this - though it cannot be known to exactly what extent.

Figure 3: Registration rates (% of eligible EU citizens registered) by municipality, 2012, Belgium

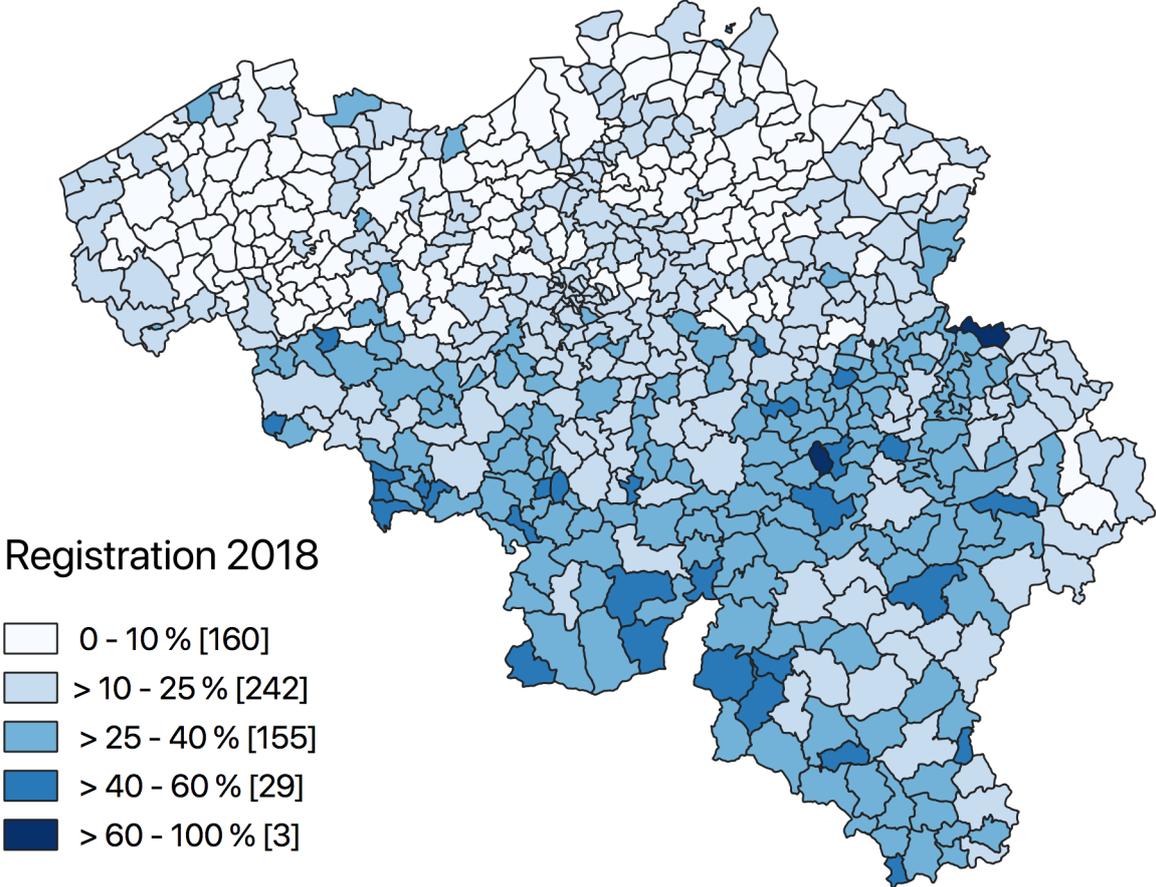


Map: Luana Russo. Source: as table 7.

This geographical pattern of the difference between Wallonia in the south and Flanders in the north is particularly evident from figure 3, which maps registration rates amongst EU citizens in 2012. Registration was generally higher in Wallonia than in Flanders, as the darker municipalities in the south of Belgium clearly show. All 114 out of the 589 municipalities where registration rates were below 10 per cent in 2012 were located in Flanders, while all 56 municipalities where it was highest (over 40 per cent) were in Wallonia. All but one of the Brussels municipalities had a registration rate amongst EU voters of between 10 and 25 per cent.

Generally it was highest near the French border, but there was not otherwise a clear ‘border effect’ in Flanders, or near the other borders, except in the five municipalities that border Maastricht on the Flemish side.

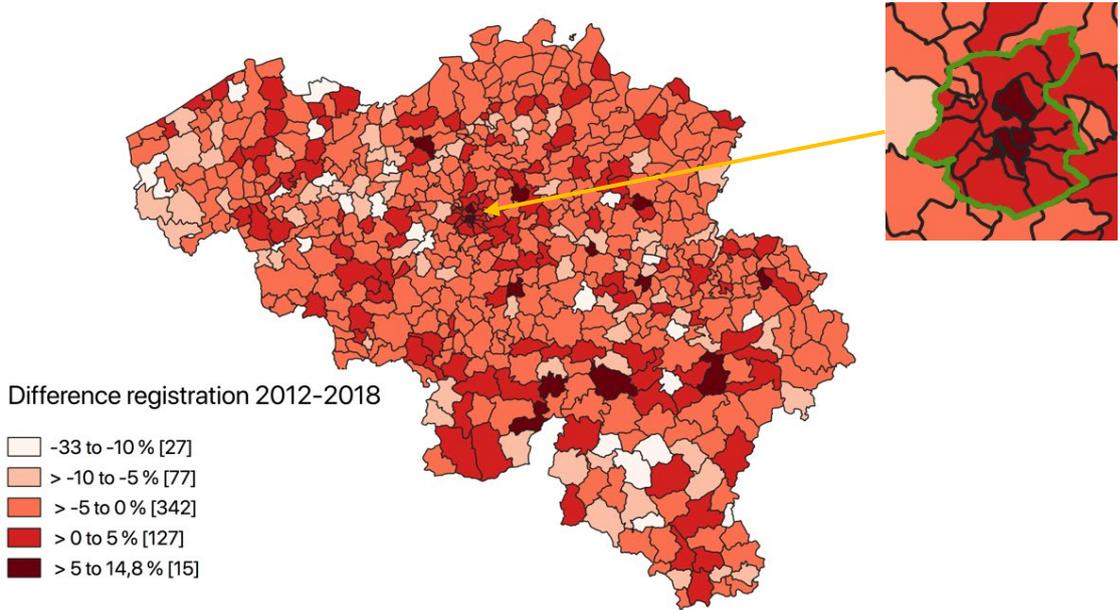
Figure 4: Registration rates (% of eligible EU citizens registered) by municipality, 2018, Belgium



Map: Luana Russo. Source: as table 7

As figure 4 shows, the overall pattern was remarkably similar in 2018. The slightly lower registration rate can be seen in the overall lightening of the map; there were more regions in which registration was less than 10% in 2018, particularly in Flanders and the south-east of Wallonia. In fact, when mapping the difference in 2012 and 2018 registration rates, as in figure 5, the decrease in registration does not seem to follow a particular geographical pattern in Flanders and Wallonia; it went up in some, and down in others. Brussels (which is highlighted in the side box) followed the opposite trend, with an increase in registration rates in nearly all municipalities.

Figure 5: Difference in 2012 and 2018 registration rates (relative to 2012), mobile EU citizens, by municipality, Belgium



Map: Luana Russo. Sources as table 7

5.1.1.2 European Parliament elections

For the nationalities that have the option as external citizens, EU citizens living in Belgium can choose to vote in Belgium or in their countries of citizenship. By contrast with municipal elections, in which registration rates give an approximation of turnout due to compulsory voting, for European Parliament elections the registration rate in Belgium only gives half the picture. Failure to register in Belgium for European Parliament elections does not necessarily mean that a mobile EU citizen did not vote in the election, as they may instead have cast a ballot in their own countries – though as noted above, the data on external voting is very fragmentary across the EU.

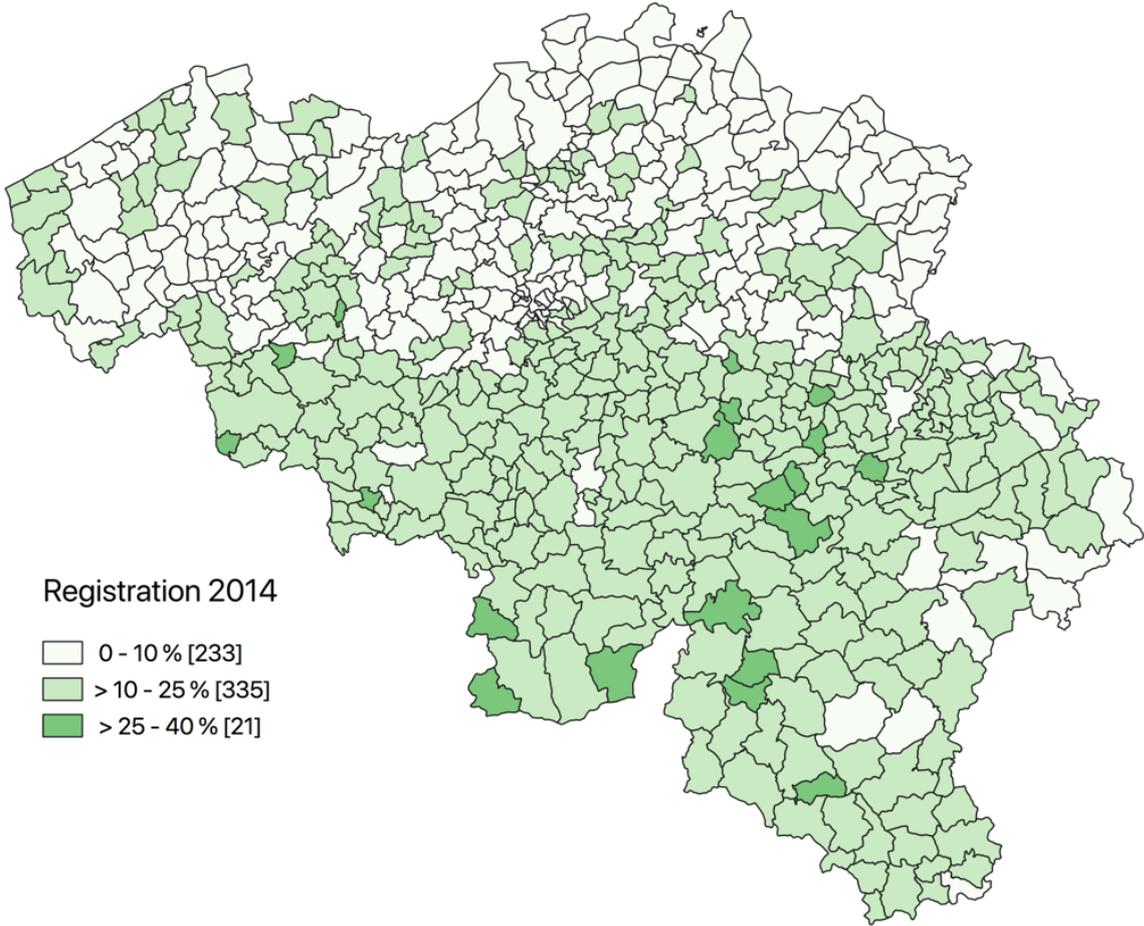
With this caveat in mind, however, it is still worth examining the patterns of electoral participation in European Parliament elections amongst those EU citizens who have chosen to vote in Belgium. Of the 684,306 eligible EU citizens in Belgium in 2014, some 66,125 registered to vote in the European Parliament election there. This registration rate (9.7%) was even lower than in the municipal elections of 2012 and 2018 – but for the reasons outlined above, it may not represent the full picture of political participation amongst mobile EU voters in Belgium.⁴¹ It does, however, give a proxy for the extent to which EU citizens desiring to vote wished to be represented through Belgian MEPs rather than those from their country of origin.

When looking at the registration rate by region, several interesting aspects emerge. As in municipal elections, Wallonia had the highest registration rates (a mean of 16.8 per cent across its 262 municipal districts), but it was Brussels (with a mean registration rate across its 19 communes of only 7.9 per cent), not Flanders (9.2 per cent), that had the lowest registration rate.⁴² This might be a consequence of the presence of the embassies in Brussels.

As many EU countries offer the possibility of casting an external ballot at embassies, this could be considered a practical alternative to voting within the Belgian system without having to travel extensively

Figure 6 illustrates the registration rate per municipality. Although the geographical pattern of registration looks similar to that of the municipal elections – with higher participation in Wallonia – there are far fewer districts where registration rates were over 25%; only 21 municipal districts of out 589 crossed this threshold.

Figure 6: Mobile EU registration rates by municipality, European Parliament election 2014, Belgium



Map: Luana Russo. Source: as footnote 42

5.1.2 Luxembourg

As the country in the EU with by far the highest proportion of non-citizen residents – as well as the country from which the European Commission president from 2014-19 came – the electoral participation of Luxembourg’s foreign population is of particular interest.

As of 1 January 2019, there were people of 171 nationalities living in Luxembourg. Across the country, 244,400 people (40.6% of the country’s population) were from other EU countries, mainly Portugal, France, Italy, Belgium and Germany.⁴³

Given its high foreign population, electoral rights are only granted to non-citizens who fulfil minimum residence requirements which do not apply to resident citizens. In respect of EU citizens, this was permitted under the derogations contained in Art. 14 of Directive 93/108/EC and Art. 12.1 of Directive 94/80/EC.⁴⁴ From 1995, these initially these restricted mobile EU voting rights in local elections to those with six years of residency, and five in European Parliament elections (double these periods for candidacy rights).⁴⁵ With successive reforms from 2003 to 2013, the restrictions were loosened slightly. There is now no minimum residence requirement for voting in European Parliament elections (as long as the voter is registered 87 days before the election), and but still a requirement for at least 5 years of residence (the last year uninterrupted) to vote in local elections.⁴⁶

Due to this long period of minimum residence, the pool of potential voters is smaller than the number of voting-age EU citizens in the country. In the 2017 municipal elections, one third of the foreign citizens of voting age were ineligible to vote due to insufficient prior residence, including the majority of Romanians, Hungarians, Greeks and Bulgarians.⁴⁷

Electoral registration is not compulsory for non-Luxembourg citizens, but once registered, voting is. Like Belgium, therefore, registration rates among mobile EU voters give an approximation as to electoral participation levels.

5.1.2.1 Municipal Elections

Communal councils are elected for six-year periods in Luxembourg. The most recent election was on 8 October 2017. As noted above, EU citizens (and third-country nationals) over the age of 18 are eligible to vote on condition of having been resident in Luxembourg for five years. In 2017, 151,938 of the country’s 227,164 resident non-citizens met this criterion, most of them from other EU countries.

Whereas Luxembourgish citizens are registered automatically to vote, non-citizens must register actively by the 87th day before the election, and are compelled to vote once registered. This can be done electronically and requires the voter to supply supporting identification documents and sign a declaration. Once registered, a voter remains on the electoral register for municipal elections thereafter (but the roll for European Parliament elections requires separate registration).⁴⁸ As table 9 shows, in 2017 only 34,638 foreigners were registered to vote in municipal elections. In itself, this was an increase on the registration rates in 2011 and 2005, but still meant that fewer than one out of four eligible non-Luxembourgish electors was actually in a position to vote. The registration rate was marginally higher amongst eligible EU electors than non-EU residents (though the latter constituted only a small proportion of the non-citizen electorate).

Table 9: Registration rates, EU and non-EU citizens (amongst those eligible), municipal election 2017, Luxembourg

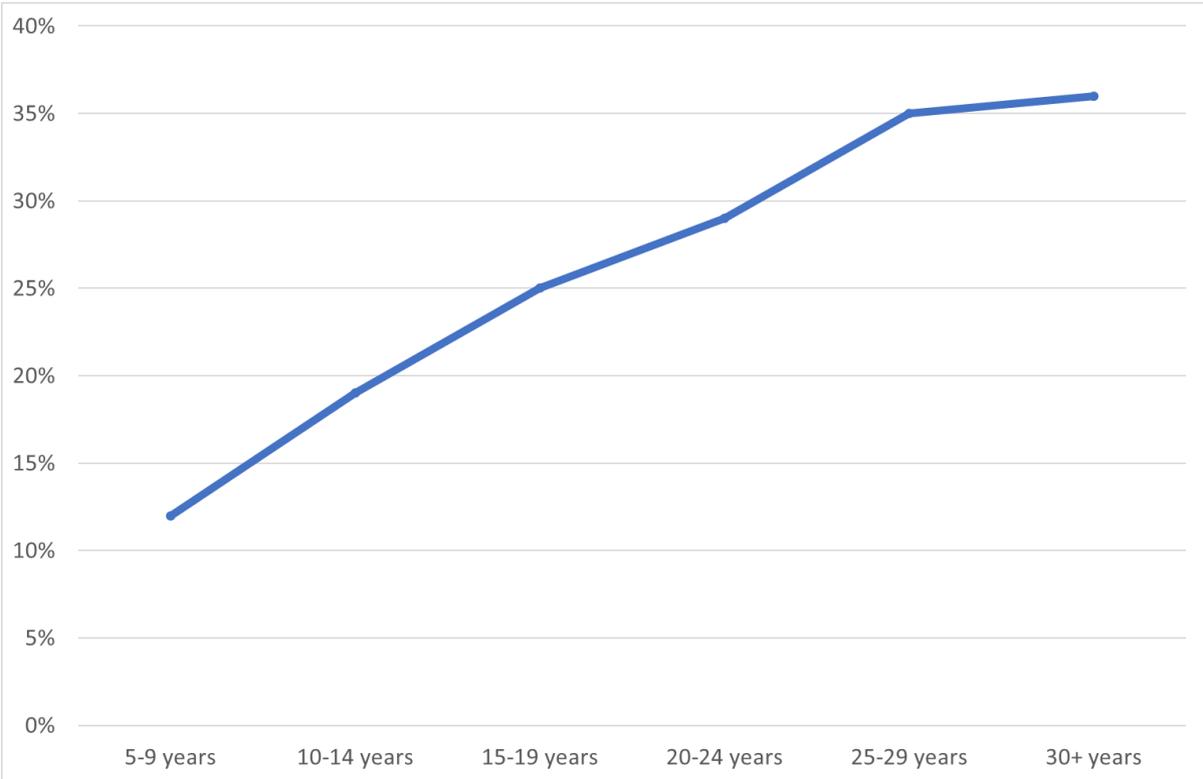
Non-Luxembourg citizenship category	Eligible population	Registered	Non-registered	% of eligible registered
EU	135,154	31,288	103,866	23.1%
Non-EU	16,784	3,350	13,434	20.0%
Overall total	151,938	34,638	117,300	22.8%

Source: calculations based on CEFIS (2018)⁴⁹

A number of observations can be made about the characteristics of voter registration amongst non-citizens:

- It was lowest amongst young voters (less than 10% among voters under 30) and highest amongst people aged 45-75 (28 to 34 per cent).
- It was marginally higher among women than men, though the difference was not large (24 per cent compared with 22 per cent).
- The longer a foreign citizen had been living in Luxembourg, the more likely he or she was to vote – but even after 30 or more years, two-thirds of non-citizens still did not register to vote in local elections (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Registration rates of foreign citizens, by length of time resident in Luxembourg (2017, % of eligible)



Source: CEFIS (2018)⁵⁰

Within these totals, there was a wide disparity of registration rates amongst different nationalities. Table 10 shows the evolution in the number of registered voters from each EU country since 1999, and the relative registration rates amongst potentially eligible electors (those who were over 18 years of age and had lived in Luxembourg for five years) in the 2017 election.

Table 10: Mobile EU citizen registration rates (number and % of eligible), municipal election 2017, Luxembourg

Code	Country of citizenship	1999	2005	2011	2017	% registration 2017
AT	Austria	45	73	144	172	32%
BE	Belgium	1,510	2,205	2,960	3,186	28%
BG	Bulgaria	-	-	19	70	13%
CY	Cyprus	-	1	2	7	13%
CZ	Czech Republic	-	10	38	96	20%
DE	Germany	1,197	1,665	2,166	2,215	28%
DK	Denmark	142	183	271	305	25%
EE	Estonia	-	1	7	36	11%
EL	Greece	94	128	223	308	26%
ES	Spain	260	333	425	493	18%
FI	Finland	4	34	75	103	16%
FR	France	1,631	2,471	3,916	5,120	24%
HR	Croatia*	-	(15)	(20)	37	13%
HU	Hungary	-	6	38	74	12%
IE	Ireland	51	93	158	200	22%
IT	Italy	3,131	3,579	3,822	3,378	27%
LT	Lithuania	-	-	9	40	11%
LV	Latvia	-	1	9	25	8%
MT	Malta	-	1	5	21	15%
NL	Netherlands	534	676	884	861	32%
PL	Poland	-	39	111	260	13%
PT	Portugal	4,896	10,622	12,211	13,093	22%
RO	Romania	-	-	56	173	13%
SE	Sweden	29	78	116	200	20%
SI	Slovenia	-	8	13	34	12%
SK	Slovakia	-	1	17	53	14%
UK	United Kingdom	311	498	647	728	22%
	Total EU	13,835	22,706	28,342	31,288	23%
	Total non-EU	-	1,251	2,595	3,350	20%
	Overall total	13,835	23,957	30,937	34,638	23%

Source: combined calculations based on CEFIS (2011) and CEFIS (2018)⁵¹

*Croatia joined the EU in 2013 and its voters are included in the 'non-EU' total prior to the 2017 election.

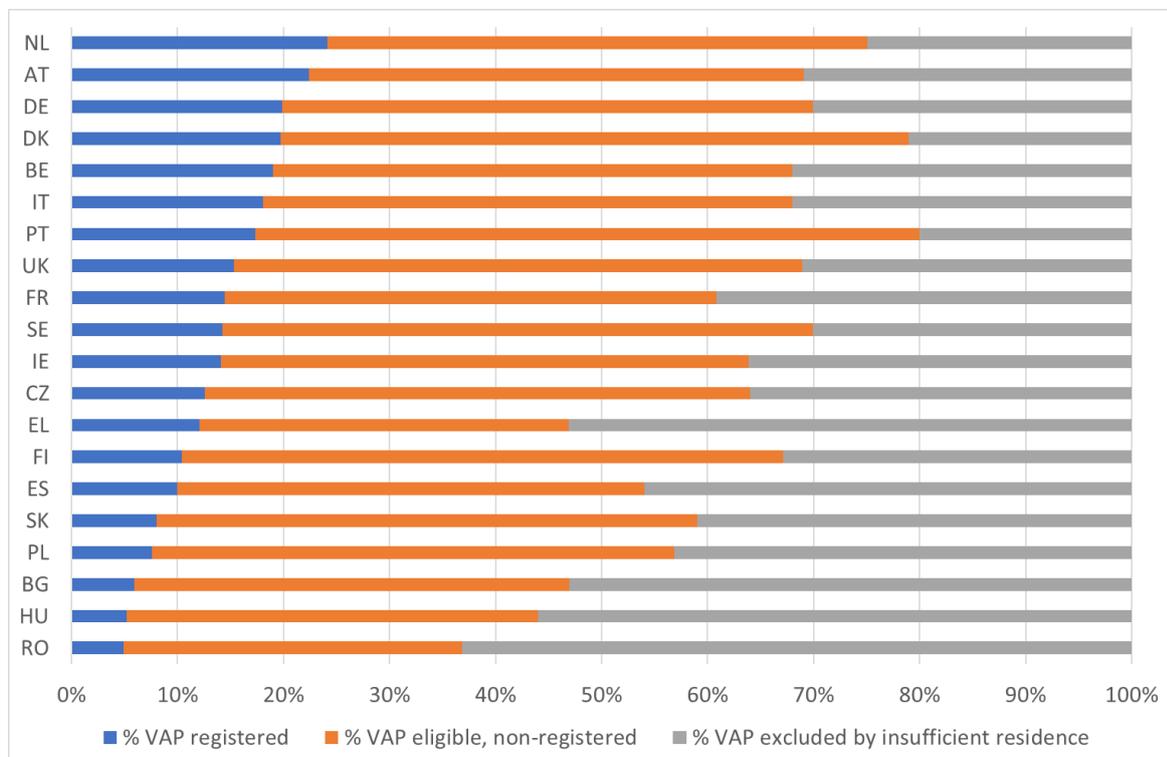
Bearing in mind that the stock of non-citizens is not constant – with some naturalising each year, some leaving, and some arriving – and that some groups are much larger than others, three factors are particularly noticeable from table 10:

- The number of EU citizens registered to vote in Luxembourg local elections has increased for all nationalities in each successive election since 1999 (the only exceptions being a very slight fall in the absolute number of Italians and Dutch voters in 2017).

- The majority of EU voters in Luxembourg come from a narrow group of states. Reflecting the demographics of the country, the largest groups of voters are from Portugal, France, Belgium, Italy and Germany, who together accounted in 2017 for just under 27,000 of the 31,000 or so EU voters. At the other end of the spectrum, eleven EU nationalities (mainly new Member States) had fewer than 100 voters registered across the country. This is of relevance when assessing the languages that possible electoral outreach materials should focus on.
- Notwithstanding the different sizes of diaspora groups, relative registration rates amongst each nationality are considerably higher among citizens of the old Member States than the new ones. To put it another way: if every eligible EU citizen had registered to vote in 2017, there would have been 7,272 voters from new Member States and 127,882 from the old ones. In reality, only 926 voters across Luxembourg came from new Member States (compared with 30,362 from old ones).

Shifting the focus from *eligible* electors to the entire voting-age mobile EU population in Luxembourg, the 5-year residence restriction disenfranchises some nationalities more than others. Figure 8 shows that several nationalities stand out in this regard, due to changing patterns of European mobility: the majority of Romanians, Hungarians, Greeks, and Spaniards in resident in Luxembourg are ineligible to vote in the first place. By contrast, three-quarters of Portuguese and Danes, and about two-thirds of Dutch, Swedes, Finns, Brits and Germans, would in principle be eligible to vote. In these cases, the main reason that many of them do not is down to non-registration rather than disqualification.

Figure 8: Proportions of voting-age population registered, non-registered and ineligible, by nationality, municipal election 2017, Luxembourg (% of total)



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from CEFIS (2018)⁵²

5.1.2.2 European Parliament elections

As table 11 shows, the number of mobile EU citizens registered to vote increased steadily in every European Parliament election from 1994 onwards, from just 6,907 in 1994 to 21,650 by 2014.⁵³ The preliminary figure for 2019 indicates that the EU registration number plateaued at 22,575. In the process, this increased their ‘electoral weight’ – the proportion of the electorate comprising mobile EU citizens resident in Luxembourg – from 3.1 per cent to 8.2 per cent by 2014, with a slight drop to 7.9 per cent in 2019. Even accounting for the 5-year residence requirement that existed before the 2014 election, this is still well short of the proportion of the population that EU citizens constitute, meaning that they are significantly under-represented in choosing Luxembourg’s members of the European Parliament.

It is worth remembering again that the number of EU citizens who register to vote in Luxembourg does not give a complete picture of participation in European Parliament elections amongst the mobile EU citizens who live there; as noted above, it is also possible that many of them will choose to vote in their countries of citizenship, if able to do so. This is particularly the case for the city of Luxembourg itself, where the largest group of foreign citizens lives, and which has many embassies. It was estimated, for example, that in 2004 around half the French and Italians living in Luxembourg chose to cast their ballot in their respective elections, rather than in Luxembourg.⁵⁴

The largest groups of registered voters once again come from Portugal, France, Italy, Belgium and Germany, with some of the new Member States only accounting for a handful of registered voters (in 2014 there were only two Cypriots in the whole of Luxembourg on the electoral register, for example).

Aside from the absolute numbers, another way of measuring the participation of EU citizens in the election is to look at their relative registration rate – i.e., what proportion of those eligible to register actually do? Two patterns are clear: the registration rates are even lower than in municipal elections (which is to be expected, given the fact that many people can vote in other countries instead) and the pattern by nationality is fairly similar: the ‘old’ Member States generally have higher registration rates than the new members states. There are also some nationalities from the old Member States with very low registration rates – most notably Swedes, Greeks and Finns. Overall, the rate of 12.9 per cent means that almost nine out of ten non-Luxembourgish EU residents do not vote for Luxembourg’s MEPs.

Table 11: Registered EU voters, European Parliament elections, Luxembourg, 1994-2014

Country of citizenship		1999	2004	2009	2014	Relative registration rate, 2014 (as % of eligible, by nationality)
PT	Portugal	2,699	3,646	6,546	7,812	10.9%
FR	France	1,066	1,266	2,266	3,565	11.6%
IT	Italy	3,095	3,048	3,375	3,124	18.4%
BE	Belgium	1,150	1,413	1,930	2,309	14.7%
DE	Germany	879	1,127	1,633	2,048	18.3%
UK	United Kingdom	248	336	467	595	12.3%
NL	Netherlands	299	403	549	594	17.0%
ES	Spain	180	190	228	380	9.8%
DK	Denmark	56	83	141	224	13.9%
IE	Ireland	77	89	112	165	13.5%
PL	Poland	-	16	63	136	4.7%
EL	Greece	26	35	61	122	6.8%
RO	Romania	-	-	22	103	4.7%
AT	Austria	19	47	58	97	13.7%
SE	Sweden	16	25	40	75	5.7%
CZ	Czech Republic	-	3	17	59	9.1%
BG	Bulgaria	-	-	8	58	6.9%
HU	Hungary	-	2	10	44	4.0%
FI	Finland	1	7	22	37	4.4%
SK	Slovakia	-	-	6	29	5.2%
LV	Latvia	-	-	5	18	4.0%
EE	Estonia	-	-	5	16	3.6%
SI	Slovakia	-	3	8	16	3.9%
MT	Malta	-	-	4	8	4.0%
HR	Croatia	-	-	-	7	1.5%
LT	Lithuania	-	-	2	7	1.3%
CY	Cyprus	-	-	1	2	3.1%
Total		9,811	11,739	17,579	21,650	12.2%

5.1.3 Spain

Spain is one of the countries that offers the most detailed free available data on the composition of its electorate. including non-Spanish citizens residing in Spain, via the Spanish Statistical Office (INE – *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*).⁵⁵ Amongst the breakdowns available are:

- the proportion of non-Spanish residents that registered to vote (at municipal level);
- their nationalities (at provincial level);
- gender and age (at national level).

In this section of the report we provide an overview of selected information by focusing on the registered non-Spanish electorate in municipal and European Parliament elections over the last 15 years. We also offer a geographical and demographic analysis of the registration patterns for the 22 May 2011 and 24 May 2015 municipal elections.

In Spain, registration for non-citizens is voluntary and, for the municipal election, it is necessary to register only once. Registering does not imply any obligation to vote, and whilst there is detailed information on registration patterns, it is not known exactly how many of the registered voters go on to cast a ballot. Nonetheless, since those who are not registered cannot vote, the proportion of resident foreigners who actually participate in Spanish elections cannot be any higher than the registration rate, and is likely to be lower. (People's registration is retained from election to election, so even if they vote the first time if they have gone to the trouble of registering, they may not continue to participate thereafter.)⁵⁶

From the available statistics, we can still discern two important pieces of information about the involvement of non-citizen residents in Spanish local and European elections. First, it is possible to analyse how much 'electoral weight' the proportion of registered non-Spanish electorate adds, compared with the national citizens, which gives us an understanding of the impact these voters could potentially have on election results. Second, through comparison with census results it is possible to estimate approximately what proportion of the eligible resident non-citizens actually register to vote, and hence to obtain a picture of which demographic groups are most under-represented in the political system.

5.1.3.1 Overview of the number of registered voters

Spain publishes the number of people on the electoral register in three categories – Spanish citizens resident in Spain (referred to by their Spanish abbreviation, CER); Spanish citizens abroad (CERA); and non-Spanish citizens resident in Spain (CERE). In European Parliament elections, Spaniards abroad have the right to vote, as well as EU residents in Spain who are not voting in their own country. To vote in municipal elections, it is necessary to be resident in the country (non-residents have been excluded since the 2011 local election), as well as to hold Spanish or EU citizenship, or the nationality of one of 12 third countries with which Spain has bilateral treaties on electoral rights (but in the non-EU cases, only after a 5-year residence period).⁵⁷

When it comes to local elections, table 12 that shows the number of registered non-Spanish voters increased markedly between 2003 and 2011, and has remained fairly constant since then. The 'foreign citizens able to vote' category includes not only EU citizens but also the limited group of third country nationals with voting rights, but mobile EU citizens constitute over 95% of the foreign voters (442,127 in 2015, and 449,680 in 2019). In recent elections, Romanians and British citizens constituted the largest single groups by nationality.

These figures represent around a quarter of the 1.7 million or so EU citizens of voting age living in Spain in 2019, suggesting that there is only limited interest among the non-national community in participating in local politics in Spain.

Table 12: Registered voters by category, municipal elections, 2003-2019, Spain

Year	Resident Spanish Citizens	Spanish citizens abroad	Foreign citizens able to vote (incl. non-EU)	Total registered electorate
2003	33,343,811	1,063,874	153,516	34,561,201
2007	33,761,950	1,168,639	334,738	35,265,327
2011	34,204,677	(705,774)*	479,933	34,684,610*
2015	34,634,718	(919,099)*	464,119	35,098,837*
2019	34,804,358	(2,103,951)*	466,774	35,271,132*

Source: National Statistical Institute and Ministry of the Interior⁵⁸

*= Non-resident citizens excluded from eligibility to vote from 2011 onwards, but still listed on electoral census.

When it comes to European Parliament elections, it is notable that both the number of Spanish voters abroad, and also the number of EU citizens registered to vote in EP elections, has increased at each of the last three elections (see table 13).

The number of registered Spanish voters abroad for European Parliament elections almost exactly equals the figures for the number of Spanish citizens over the age of 18 living outside Spain, as given in the Register of Spaniards Living Abroad (Padrón de españoles residentes en el extranjero (PERE)) In 2019, just under 600,000 of them lived in other EU countries.⁵⁹ Owing partly to the recession, the number of Spaniards abroad has increased markedly since 2009, from around 1.2 million to 2.1 million. In the absence of turnout data, however, we cannot be sure if the increased number of electors on the roll means that more mobile EU voters have voted (either as Spanish residents, or Spanish expatriates).

In 2019, for the first time in 20 years, the European Parliament and municipal elections were held on the same day, allowing a clear comparison of the registration of non-Spanish voters. Excluding the third-country nationals (who could not vote in the European Parliament elections), there was a difference of 84,370 in the number of EU citizens registered to vote in local elections and EP ones. This could indicate that the individuals in questions had de-registered to vote in their own countries, or could indicate confusion on the part of officials about the procedures surrounding the declaration that a voter will not vote in more than one country.⁶⁰ In absolute terms, the largest differences were among Romanians (-27,738), British (-17,511) and Germans (-8,110), though taking account of the number of people from each country, Bulgarians and Finns had the largest proportional differences (a 30 per cent difference in the numbers registered to vote in the two elections on the same day).

Table 13: Registered voters by category, European Parliament elections, 2009-2019, Spain

Year	Resident Spanish Citizens	Spanish citizens abroad	Foreign citizens able to vote (incl. non-EU)	Total registered electorate
2009	33,973,810	1,234,314	284,443	35,492,567
2014	34,484,969	1,691,367	337,748	36,514,084
2019	34,804,358	2,103,951	365,668	37,273,977

Source: National Statistical Institute and Ministry of the Interior⁶¹

5.1.3.2 Geographical patterns to foreign voter registration in Spain

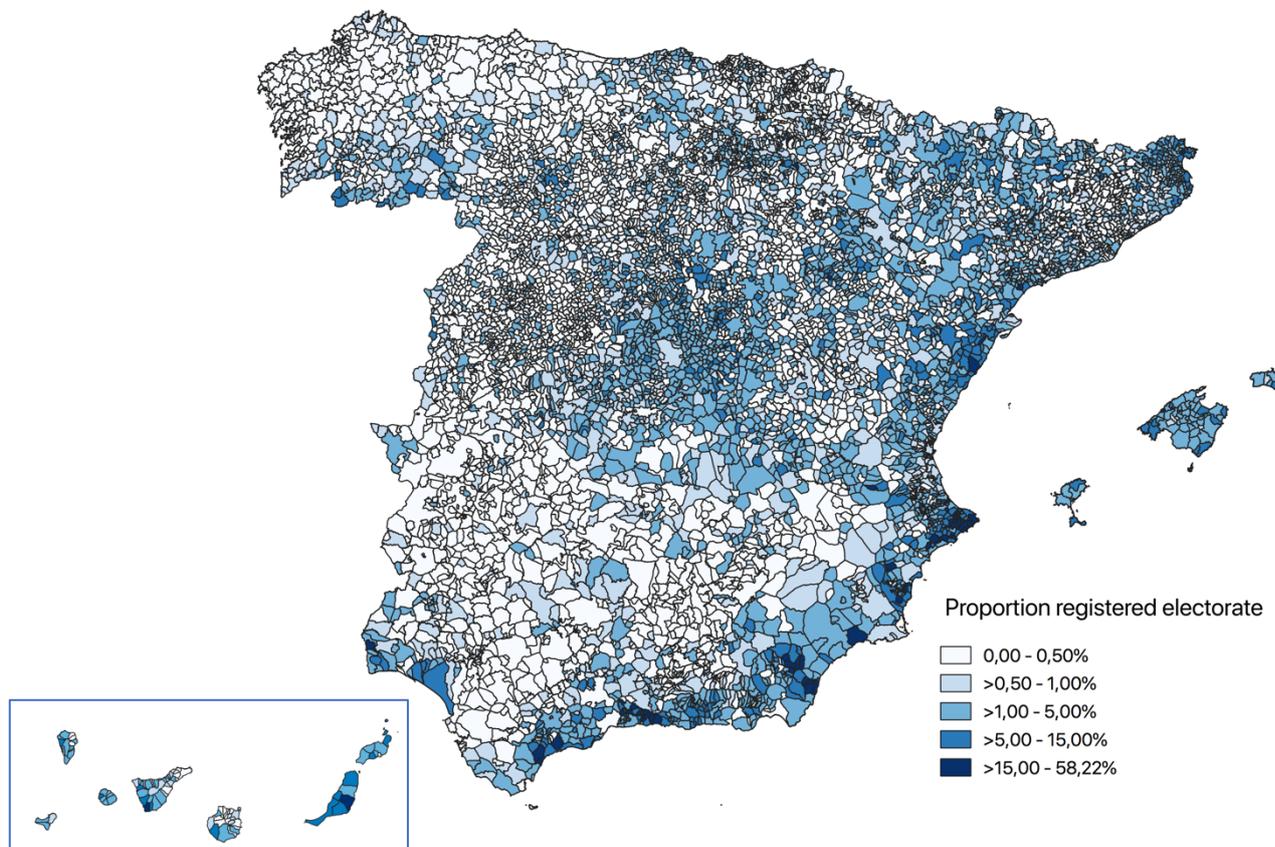
Across Spain, foreign voters constituted 1.3 per cent of the electorate in the 2015 municipal elections. Behind this aggregate figure, however, lies much variation in the proportion of registered non-national voters across different areas.

Out of the 8,122 municipalities:

- In 2,201 there was not a single non-national voter.
- A further 1,726 had an electorate comprising less than 0.5 per cent foreign voters.
- In 3,651 cases, foreigners constituted between 0.5 and 5 per cent of the electorate.

In fewer than one in ten municipalities did the proportion of foreign voters exceed 5 per cent. In general, as figure 9 shows, the islands, the south coast (especially around Valencia) and the French border had overall a higher proportion of registered foreign voters. Also, the area around greater Madrid (the center of Spain) and Zaragoza (towards North-East) showed a higher proportion of registered foreign voters, though by the standards of many major cities in Europe, the proportion overall was relatively small. Several other municipalities on the south coast – partly those places to which British expatriates have retired – had electorates that exceeded one-third foreign citizens, but only in four municipalities in the whole of Spain – Benitachell, Arboleas, San Fulgencio and Llíber – was there a majority of non-Spanish voters.

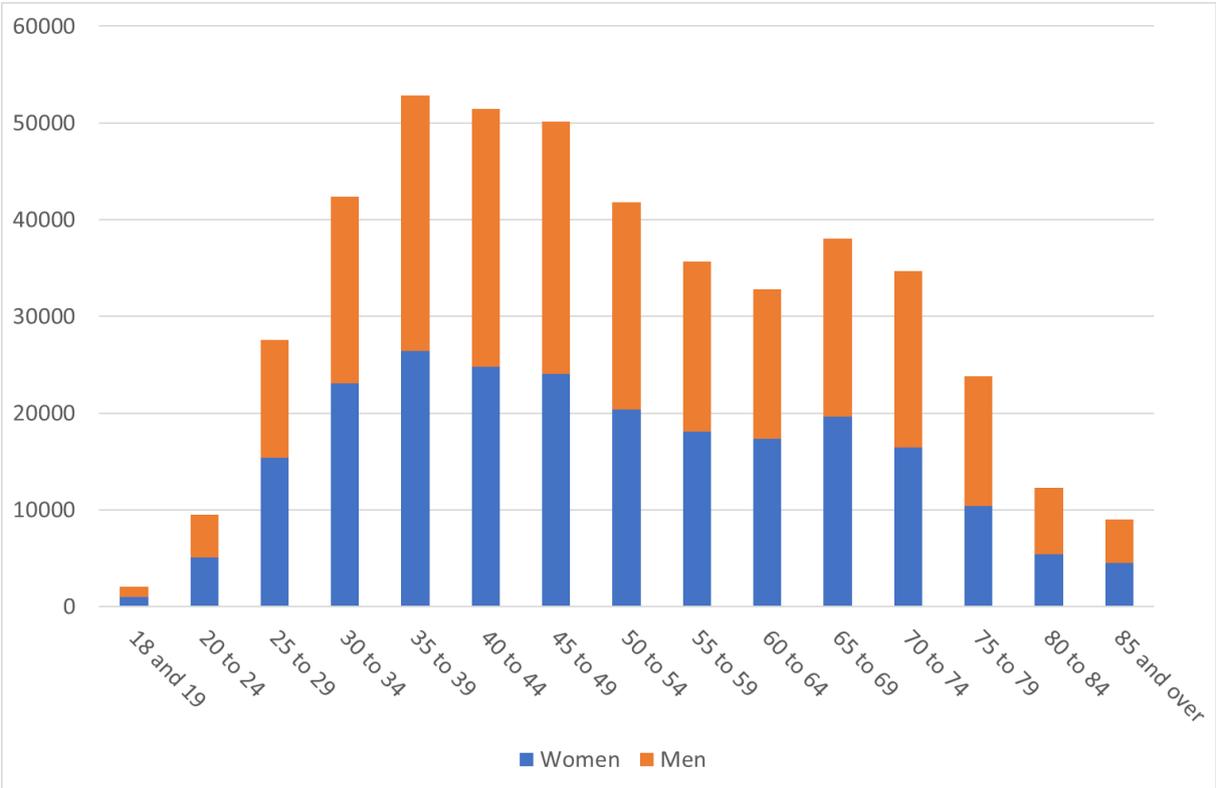
Figure 9: Registered non-Spanish voters, by municipality, 2015, Spain (% of total electorate)⁶²



Map: Luana Russo

Finally, figure 10 shows the distribution of registered foreign voters by age in 2015. The largest groups of non-Spanish voters comprised people of working age from about 30 to 55 (half the registered foreign electorate), and another large group of retirees (a quarter of the non-Spanish electorate are aged over 65). There were relatively few young voters, matching the generally lower inclination of younger people to vote in general. Thus the largest registered foreign electorates of Spain comprised people of middle working ages, and a second cohort of retirees (both of which had a slight surplus of males); and two smaller groups of younger voters, and people of late working age (with slightly more females in these groups). Balanced across the whole age range, the number of male and female registered voters of non-Spanish citizenship was almost exactly equal.

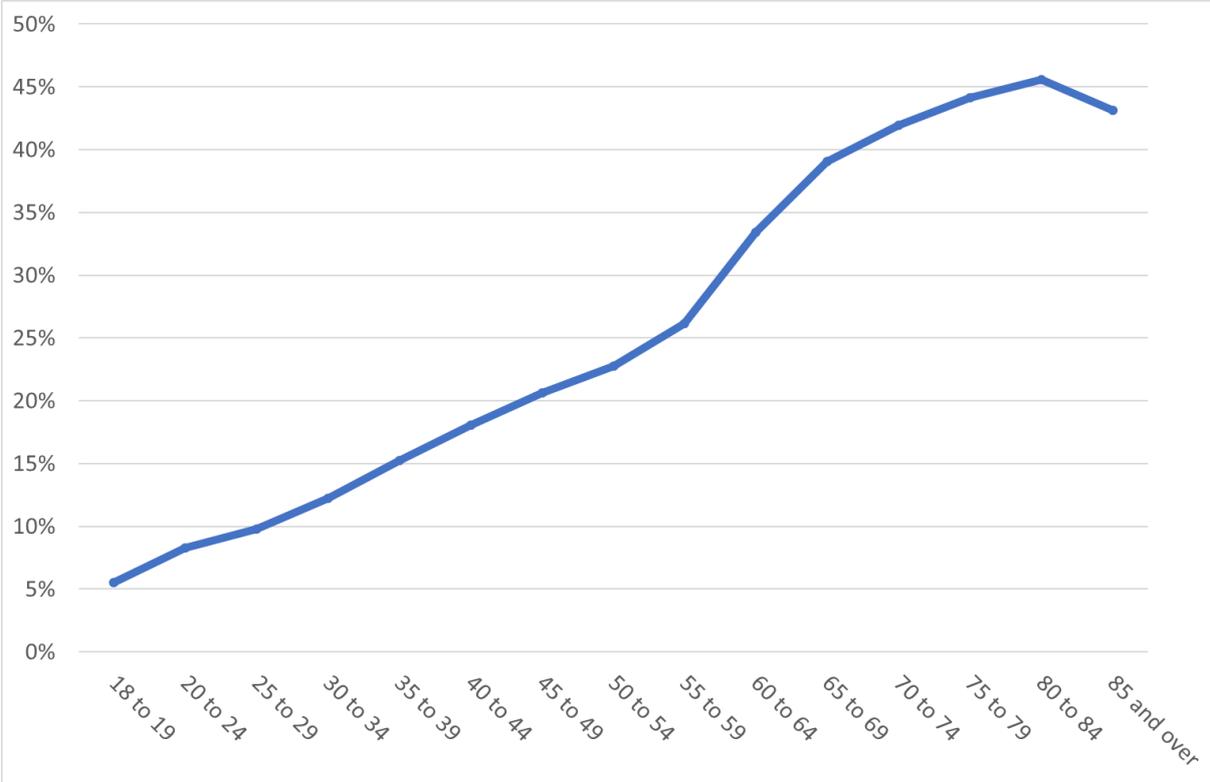
Figure 10: Number of registered non-Spanish voters, municipal elections, Spain, 2015 (total number of electors, by age group)



Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2015)⁶³

Knowing the number of registered voters tells us a certain amount about their potential impact on the electoral process, but we cannot tell from figure 10 how representative the registered electorate of non-citizens is of the wide cohort of non-citizen residents in Spain. For that, we turn to the previous election in 2011, which came shortly before a national census. By comparing data on the foreign population (for countries whose citizens had voting rights) with the registered foreign electorate, it is possible to establish the registration rates by age group and nationality. One caveat to this is that the data do not record the number of people from the eligible third countries that did not meet the 5-year residence requirement, so not all voting-age people from these countries were necessarily able to register in the first place.

Figure 11: Registration rates by age cohort, foreign citizens, municipal elections, 2011, Spain (% of eligible electorate)



Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2015)⁶⁴

A quarter of the eligible non-citizen population was under the age of 30 (c.660,000 out of 2.6 million), but they accounted for only one in eight registered voters. Over-65s, by contrast, accounted for only a tenth of the foreigners in Spain in 2011, but a quarter of the registered foreign electorate. Figure 11 shows the reason why: differential registration rates by age.⁶⁵ As in Luxembourg, there was also differential registration by nationality (shown in table 14). Citizens of the old Member States had registration rates between 20 per cent (Portugal) and 37 per cent (France) of the eligible voting-age citizens from these countries. By contrast, no new EU Member State’s cohort had a registration rate above 18 per cent. Even the new Member States’ citizens, however, were more likely to be registered than the citizens of any of the eligible third countries, for whom registration rates were between 1 per cent and 10 per cent of the voting-age population – though in this case, of course, we should take account of the fact that some may have been ineligible to register due to insufficient residence in Spain.

Table 14: Registration rates by nationality, municipal elections, 2011, Spain (% of voting-age population by nationality)

		Registered voters (N)	Total population (voting age)	Registration rate
	Total from eligible countries (EU26+10)	479,816	2,661,757	18%
	EU nationalities			
AT	Austria	2,209	8,617	26%
BE	Belgium	9,159	26,822	34%
BG	Bulgaria	19,437	126,801	15%
CY	Cyprus	23	182	13%
CZ	Czech Republic	971	7,696	13%
DE	Germany	47,483	141,824	33%
DK	Denmark	3,371	10,385	32%
EE	Estonia	145	1,274	11%
EL	Greece	831	3,654	23%
FI	Finland	2,758	9,914	28%
FR	France	33,203	90,535	37%
HU	Hungary	784	7,353	11%
IE	Ireland	4,169	12,790	33%
IT	Italy	40,663	156,474	26%
LT	Lithuania	1,731	16,792	10%
LU	Luxembourg	176	496	36%
LV	Latvia	374	3,149	12%
MT	Malta	36	205	18%
NL	Netherlands	14,790	41,675	35%
PL	Poland	7,823	64,384	12%
PT	Portugal	21,582	108,542	20%
RO	Romania	105,825	665,643	16%
SE	Sweden	5,438	17,978	30%
SI	Slovenia	142	1,087	13%
SK	Slovakia	851	7,054	12%
UK	United Kingdom	103,797	286,563	36%
	Non-EU nationalities			
BO	Bolivia	5,042	153,217	3%
CL	Chile	1,249	31,812	4%
CO	Colombia	12,632	211,254	6%
CV	Cape Verde	22	2,645	1%
EC	Ecuador	25,668	252,571	10%
IS	Iceland	28	823	3%
NO	Norway	829	14,527	6%
NZ	New Zealand	33	497	7%
PE	Peru	5,897	107,640	5%
PY	Paraguay	645	68,882	1%

Source: Author's calculations, based on Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011)⁶⁶

5.2 Nordic States

Within the EU, the Nordic area has the most systematically comprehensive data on electoral turnout of mobile EU voters – due to a combination of official detailed electoral authority data, academic studies and large-scale electoral surveys. In part, this high degree of detail is possible because of the centralised collection of personal information in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, which enables the connection of people’s citizenship and socio-demographic information in official records to their electoral turnout.

5.2.1 Denmark

Official Danish electoral statistics give turnout and participation levels only for the electorate as a whole (albeit split up to the level of individual polling districts), but there have been there have been register-based academic studies of electoral turnout since the early 2000s which have given a more comprehensive picture.⁶⁷ A study is now conducted regularly for each major election by the Centre for Voting and Parties at Copenhagen University. In previous years it was based on a sample of Danish municipalities. Since 2013 it has covered virtually the whole of Denmark, except for a few municipalities which did not have the technological resources to collect and compile the data in 2017. It connects (under conditions of strict confidentiality and anonymisation) the participation of each individual in Denmark to their socio-demographic characteristics and citizenship. As such, it is possible to obtain an extremely detailed picture of the characteristics of voters and non-voters, based on actual electoral register data, which guarantees a high degree of accuracy.⁶⁸

The publicly-available outputs of the data give detailed breakdowns of electoral turnout by age, gender, education level, income, occupation, immigration status, citizenship and birthplace, by municipality. Unfortunately it is not possible to cross-reference all of these groups with each other without access to the individual-level data, but we can nonetheless discern a significant amount of information about the electoral behaviour of mobile EU citizens (and other foreign voters) in Danish elections.

5.2.1.1 *Municipal elections*

Under Directive 94/80/EC, EU citizens have the right to vote in Danish local elections. Denmark also grants electoral rights to other nationalities after three years of residence. Once a person is registered in the Danish Central Personal Register (CPR), he or she is automatically sent a polling card if eligible to vote. Thus Denmark is one of the countries which effectively has automatic registration for local elections for mobile EU citizens and other non-Danes.

Comparing the turnout rates in the 2009, 2013 and 2017 municipal elections amongst people born outside Denmark (table 15), divided by region of origin, a number of things are immediately apparent.

Table 15: Turnout by place of birth and citizenship, municipal elections, 2009-17, Denmark

Country of birth	2009		2013		2017	
	Citizen	Non-citizen	Citizen	Non-citizen	Citizen	Non-citizen
Denmark	67.6	48.7	75.8	54.7	75.2	55.4
Old EU MS	65.9	36.0	73.4	39.6	72.1	39.7
New EU MS	47.1	13.6	57.5	14.7	57.5	13.5
Other Nordic	62.9	37.3	70.8	42.8	70.8	43.4
Other Western	65.0	35.5	67.8	43.5	67.2	40.9
Other non-Western	40.6	32.0	47.5	37.4	47.7	35.9
Total	66.6	31.6	74.8	34.0	74.0	32.1

Source: Bhatti et al (2010, 2014); Hansen (2018)⁶⁹

First, there is a significant difference between participation rates of foreign-born voters who have naturalised, and those who have not. Leaving aside variables that might interact with this – such as the length of time spent in the country or the additional benefits that might come from citizenship to some non-EU citizens compared with EU citizens – the turnout levels amongst foreign-born Danish citizens are without exception higher (on average, about double or more) than foreign-born non-Danish citizens from the same parts of the world. The same effect, as we shall see below, can be observed in other countries.

Second, amongst people who are now Danish citizens who were born abroad, turnout rates are slightly lower than amongst ‘native’ Danes amongst those born in old EU Member States, other Nordic States and Western non-EU states – but markedly lower amongst those born in the new EU Member States and in non-Western countries.

This points to the fact that place of birth (and country of origin) appears to make a difference to a person’s likelihood of participating in the election, perhaps reflecting ingrained patterns of participation from a person’s socialisation. The effect is even more pronounced amongst non-citizens. In every election, Danish-born non-citizens (who are presumably mainly the children of immigrants, but likely to have grown up in Denmark) have had lower participation rates than Danish-born Danish citizens (by around 20 percentage points). But these people’s participation rates have been higher than any of the groups of foreign-born non-citizens.

Of particular interest for this study are the participation patterns of mobile EU voters and voters from the Nordic countries. In each of the last three elections, turnout rates amongst Norwegians and Icelanders have been slightly higher than amongst voters from pre-2004 EU countries.⁷⁰ However, the most striking observation – consistent with the patterns seen in Luxembourg and Spain – is that the turnout rates for mobile EU citizens from the new Member States have been approximately three times lower than from the old ones. At the same time, mobile EU citizens from the new Member States have grown as a proportion of all EU citizens in Denmark. The interaction of these two factors brought overall turnout amongst EU citizens down between 2013 and 2017.⁷¹

Broken down by country, amongst non-Danish EU citizens the turnout rates were highest amongst Swedish (51.3 per cent), Dutch (47.4 per cent) and Germans (45.8 per cent), while at

the other end of the spectrum, Bulgarians and Romanians had participation rates of a mere 12.4 and 11.8 per cent respectively.⁷²

When it comes to other demographic factors, there are mixed findings. In 2009, turnout was slightly higher amongst female non-citizen voters than male (32.9 per cent compared with 29.5 per cent), and there was a sharp rise in participation rates over the first ten years that a person had lived in Denmark, levelling off somewhat thereafter.⁷³ From the 2017 election figures, it is apparent that turnout rates were lower amongst immigrants than Danish-born citizens in all age groups, but that the gap was largest amongst younger voters and narrows somewhat amongst voters in late middle-age (between c.45 and 60 years old). In part the explanation for this lies in the ethnic make-up of the age cohorts: the largest groups in this older group are Swedes, Germans and other Nordic citizens, whereas the younger cohorts are primarily of non-Western immigrants. Thus the differential turnout rates by age and birthplace are interrelated.⁷⁴

5.2.1.2 European Parliament Elections

Overall turnout in European Parliament elections is generally above the European average, and its record turnout of 66.1 per cent in 2019 was the fourth highest of any EU country (and two of the three countries with higher turnout – Belgium, Luxembourg and Malta – had compulsory voting).

Whereas Danes abroad (with the exception of certain categories of people in state service) cannot generally vote in national Danish elections, an exception is made for European Parliament elections, but only for Danish citizens living in other EU countries. As EU citizens in another EU state, these people can choose to vote in their country of residence, but if they choose to vote in Denmark, they need to register manually for each European Parliament election as an external voter. Little is known about the turnout of these voters, as their registrations are assimilated into the electoral lists of their former municipalities of residence.⁷⁵

Mobile EU citizens living in Denmark are also entitled to vote under Directive 93/109/EC, but need to register manually the first time they vote in European Parliament elections. (The registration remains for future EP elections, however.) Given that they can also vote in their country of citizenship (if that country allows external voting), they can de-register up to 15 days before the election to avoid double voting.

Although there is detailed information on the turnout rates in the 2014 European Parliament election, the picture is not comparable with that for the municipal elections because of the differences in the registration requirements. The best estimates available suggest that there were 16,744 and 15,940 EU citizens registered in the 2009 and 2014 elections, out of an eligible population of 97,919 and 130,631, respectively. This implies that around 17 per cent of those EU citizens eligible in 2009, and a lower 12 per cent in 2014, were registered to vote in Denmark.⁷⁶ The turnout was 62.8 per cent amongst registered voters from the old EU Member States and 45 per cent amongst those from the new Member States. But given the low registration rate, it is perhaps more useful to reference this to the number of eligible voters: by this measure, turnout represented only about 7.5 per cent of the total EU voting-age population in the country.⁷⁷

5.2.2 Sweden

Sweden has one of the highest proportion of people with foreign backgrounds in Europe. In municipal and regional elections, electoral rights are afforded to EU citizens under Directive 94/80/EC, and also to citizens of Iceland or Norway (without a waiting period) and other nationalities who have been resident for three consecutive years prior to the election. In European Parliament elections, Swedish citizens (both resident in Sweden and abroad) and EU citizens in Sweden are entitled to vote. In all cases, the requirements for passive electoral rights (the right to candidacy) are broadly the same as for active electoral rights – meaning that those entitled to vote are entitled to stand for election.⁷⁸

5.2.2.1 *Municipal and Regional Elections*⁷⁹

Table 16 shows the registered electorate by region of citizenship in the municipal and regional elections of 2002 to 2014.⁸⁰ Nearly one in four Swedish residents is classed as ‘foreign background’ (either themselves born outside Sweden, or with parents born outside Sweden), and in 2017, 18.5 per cent of Sweden’s population was foreign-born. However, non-Swedish citizens accounted for only 5-7 per cent of the electorate from 2002 to 2018 (equating to 535,857 individuals in 2018).⁸¹ The difference owes much to Sweden’s high naturalisation rate, which means that the ‘Sweden’ category also contains a sizeable number of foreign-born people who are now Swedish citizens – and also that the composition of the non-citizen group is not constant, with some people moving over to the Swedish citizen category and newly-arrived mobile citizens entering the electorate (after 3 years, in the case of non-EU/Nordic citizens).⁸²

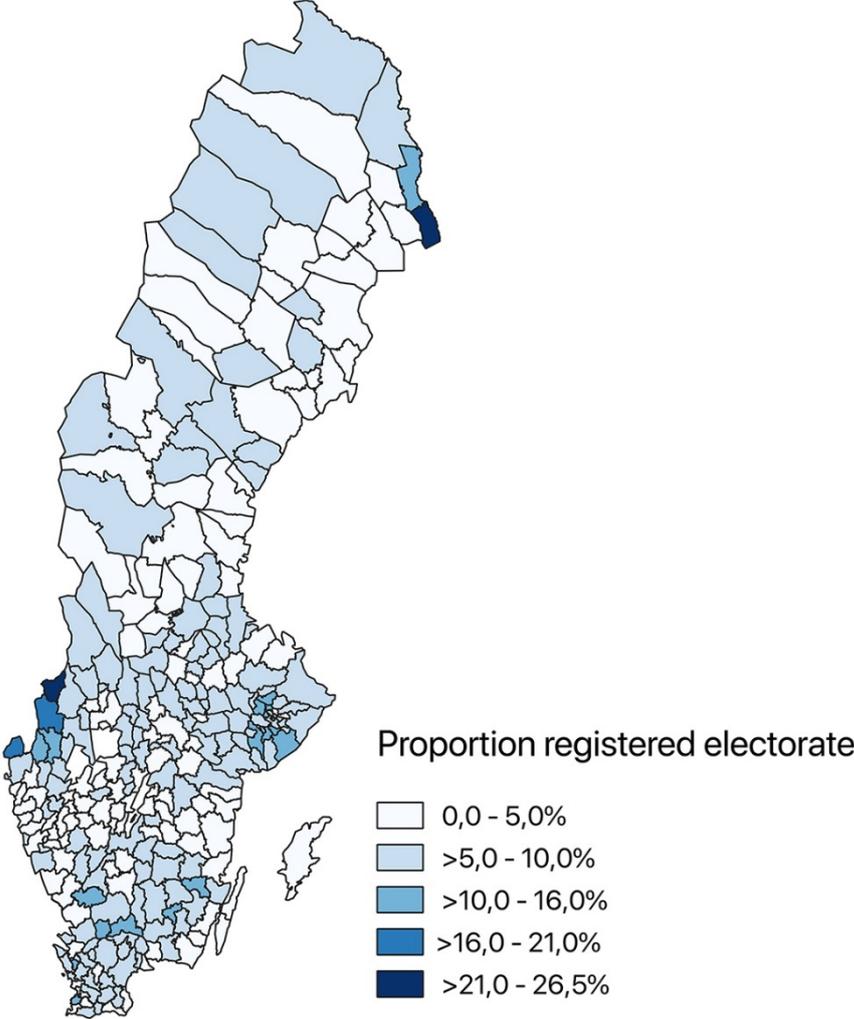
Table 16: Electorate by citizenship, municipal and regional elections 2002-2014, Sweden (proportion of all voters)

Citizenship	2002	2006	2010	2014
Sweden	95.3%	95.3%	94.7%	94.0%
The Nordic countries, excluding Sweden	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%
Europe, excluding the Nordic countries	1.5%	1.7%	2.0%	2.5%
Africa	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%
Asia	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%
North America/Oceania	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Other countries/not known	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
South America	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Statistics Sweden⁸³

Owing to the way people are classified in the official registration statistics, it is not possible to separate out the number of mobile EU citizens from the general number of non-Swedish citizens eligible to vote in each municipality. Figure 12 maps the ‘electoral weight’ of non-citizens in the 2018 Swedish municipal elections (i.e., the proportion of the total registered electorate who were not Swedish citizens)

Figure 12: Electoral weight of non-Swedish citizens, by municipality (proportion of total electorate, %), 2018, Sweden



Map: Luana Russo. Source: Statistics Sweden, as table 16.

In just over two-fifths of municipalities (119 of 290), the non-Swedish electorate was lower than 5 per cent of eligible voters in 2018, and as low as 2.1 per cent in Piteå, in the north of Sweden. At the other end of the scale, 20 localities had electorates where more than 10 per cent of voters were non-citizens of Sweden. The highest proportions were in municipalities near the state borders – Haparanda near Finland (where 26.5 per cent of the electorate were non-Swedish) and the municipalities of Eda (23.6 per cent), Strömstad (17.6 per cent) and Årjäng (16.6 per cent), on the Norwegian border. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest groups of non-

Swedish citizens among these electorates were nationals of the neighbouring states (Finland and Norway, respectively). Södertälje near Stockholm – where a third of the foreign-born population is of EU or Nordic origin, and the largest single group from is from Iraq⁸⁴ – had the highest non-citizen electorate amongst inland municipalities, at 15.6 per cent. In absolute terms, Sweden’s three biggest cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö) account for the largest numbers of non-citizen voters.

In principle, the electoral eligibility for regional and municipal elections is the same, but the larger geographical size of the 21 counties means that there is less variance in the proportion of non-citizens from region to region. In 2018, the lowest concentration was found in Västernorrlands län (4.1 per cent) on Sweden’s east coast, and the highest in Stockholms län (9.9 per cent).⁸⁵

The figures above are based on automatic registration, but it is of particular interest what proportion of those registered actually turn out to vote in local and regional elections. Participation rates have decreased substantially since first measured in 1976. Some 60 per cent of non-citizens exercised their franchise and voted in municipal and provincial elections in the 1976 election, falling gradually until 1998 and then stabilising.⁸⁶

To obtain more detailed information on recent patterns of turnout in municipal elections amongst the non-citizen and foreign-born populations, use is made of a series of datasets produced by Statistics Sweden on electoral participation in the 2006, 2010 and 2014 municipal elections. These electoral surveys contain information about individual electoral participation, matched to the Labour Force Survey, personal characteristics from the personal registry of Sweden, and actual participation information provided by the provincial authorities in Sweden. Unlike the Danish data mentioned in section 4.2.1, these data do not cover the whole electorate, but since they are based on a large representative sample and matched to individual characteristics and actual voting behaviour, we can obtain a reasonably detailed picture of the characteristics of the voting and non-voting members of the electorate.⁸⁷

Table 17 shows turnout rates by region of birth among the non-Swedish-born electorates in municipal elections from 2006 to 2014. (For comparison, turnout rates amongst Swedish-born Swedish citizens were consistently between 80 and 85 per cent in the same period.) Not shown is the fact that turnout was higher among women than men in almost all groups.

Table 17: Voting turnout (non-Swedish-born) by region of birth and Swedish citizenship status, municipal elections 2006-14, Sweden (% of registered in each group)

	2006		2010		2014	
	Non-citizen	Citizen	Non-citizen	Citizen	Non-citizen	Citizen
Nordic	38.7%	74.5%	42.2%	79.4%	43.2%	80.1%
EU	37.8%	68.5%	30.7%	71.2%	29.5%	72.3%
Other Europe	30.3%	59.2%	28.8%	68.1%	24.9%	68.8%
Africa	34.1%	58.3%	43.4%	69.5%	46.2%	70.0%
Asia	31.8%	63.7%	34.3%	69.7%	29.2%	68.9%
N. America/Oceania	40.9%	77.7%	42.5%	75.3%	40.0%	82.0%
S. America	42.5%	73.9%	39.4%	78.1%	38.6%	82.4%
Total	36.3%	66.2%	36.7%	71.6%	35.2%	72.0%

Source: Statistics Sweden Election Participation Surveys

The data are not directly comparable with those for Denmark, as the regions of the world are classified slightly differently. Two features stand out. First, turnout amongst EU and Nordic-born voters does not notably differ from that of non-Swedish citizens from elsewhere.⁸⁸ Nordic voters from countries other than Sweden participate at a lower rate than Swedes, but their turnout rates are comparable with those of people from other parts of the world. EU voters without Swedish citizenship – who would in any case have voting rights under Directive 94/80/EC, independent of Sweden’s other provisions for non-citizen enfranchisement – have among the lowest levels of participation, falling from 37.8 per cent in 2006 to just 29.5 per cent in 2014.

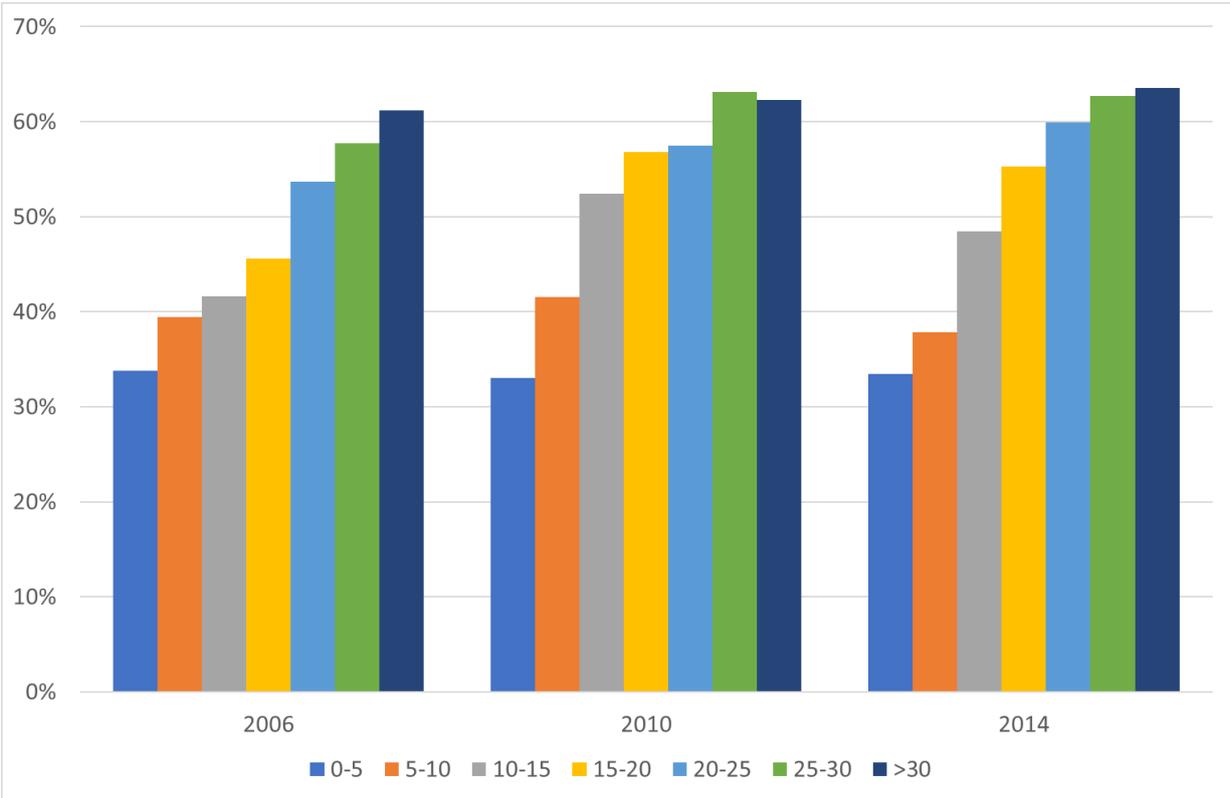
It is not possible from the available data to differentiate between the turnout rates of mobile EU voters from new and old Member States. Given that there has been an increase in the proportion of the EU-born electorate from new Member States in that period, it may be that the falling turnout rate amongst EU mobile voters reflects the same pattern as in Denmark, Spain and Luxembourg: a lower participation rate amongst citizens of the new Member States. Without a detailed breakdown of turnout by nationality, however, this must be speculative.

Second, regardless of region of origin, there is a strong difference in participation rates between foreign-born voters who are Swedish citizens, and those who are not citizens. On average, turnout rates amongst foreign-born Swedish citizens are roughly double those of non-citizens. This is consistent with similar findings from other countries.⁸⁹

It may also be a function of time: the longer a person lives in a new country, the more likely he or she is to understand its political process and have an interest in its functioning. Figure 13 shows turnout rates from 2006-2014 amongst foreign-born voters (citizens and non-citizens together) according to the length of time they had lived in Sweden. In all three elections, there is a clear correlation: the longer a voter had been living in the country, the more likely he or she (especially she) was to vote. Amongst those who had arrived within the previous 5 years, only a third voted, rising to over three-fifths among the longest-dwelling immigrants.

As discussed elsewhere,⁹⁰ this broadly holds true for people from every world region, albeit with different magnitudes of effect. It is particularly notable that recently-arrived mobile EU citizens are the least likely of all the foreign-born voters to vote, despite being guaranteed electoral rights from the outset of their stay in Sweden (unlike the third country citizens, who can only vote after 3 years’ residence). By contrast, the longest-dwelling EU citizens had a turnout level of over 72 per cent in 2014, one of the highest among the non-Swedish-born sub-groups. This would once again suggest that the nationality cohorts matter, with longer-settled EU citizens generally being from the old Member States, and more recent arrivals mainly from new ones. It is also evident from the breakdown by citizenship, length of time in the country and gender that time in the country and citizenship acquisition are both important factors in increasing electoral turnout, with the importance of each for participation varying by nationality.⁹¹ Although the two are related (people are more likely to acquire citizenship over time) it should also be borne in mind socialisation is a long-term cumulative phenomenon, whereas citizenship acquisition is a one-time action.

Figure 13: Turnout rates in municipal elections 2006-14 among foreign-born voters, by length of time in country (years), Sweden



Source: Statistics Sweden Election Participation Surveys

5.2.2.2 European Parliament Elections

The respective participation rates of Swedish citizens, mobile EU citizens, and Swedish voters abroad in the 2004 and 2009 European Parliament elections are shown in table 18.

Swedish citizens in Sweden are, of course, the largest group amongst the electorate, accounting for 97% of those registered. Their turnout rates are generally lightly above the European average. At the other end of the spectrum, the participation rates of Swedes abroad are very low, with fewer than one in ten external citizens casting a ballot for a Swedish MEP in 2004 and 2009, and only 13% of those registered in 2014.⁹²

The high participation rates amongst mobile EU citizens look impressive, but a caveat is in order. Only around a fifth of eligible EU citizens in Sweden are registered on the roll. The Swedish electoral authorities do attempt to stimulate interest in registration by sending an application form out automatically to all EU citizens registered as resident in Sweden who have not previously been on the electoral register. Unlike some states, reregistration is not necessary for every election and is carried forward automatically – but as in Denmark, to enter the roll in the first place, the EU citizen is required to actively indicate an interest.⁹³ Thus it is not surprising that turnout rates appear to be relatively high. When set against the benchmark of the estimated number of EU citizens registered compared with those eligible, the 2009 headline turnout rate of 56.7 per cent and the 2014 proportion of 61% amongst the

registered EU electorate,⁹⁴ translates to about 12 per cent of the total number of voting age EU citizens in Sweden.

There is no major difference in participation rates between men and women in European Parliament elections in Sweden.

Table 18: Electoral Participation in European Parliament elections, 2004 and 2009 (% of registered electorate, by category), Sweden

	2004			2009		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Swedish citizens – inland	37.7	38.8	38.2	46.2	46.1	46.2
Swedish citizens – abroad	9.4	9.3	9.4	10.4	8.7	9.5
EU (non-Swedish) citizens	49.3	50.4	49.9	56.6	56.9	56.7
Total	37.3	38.4	37.9	45.6	45.5	45.5

Source: Statistics Sweden⁹⁵

5.2.3 Finland

As in the other Nordic states, Finland also publishes information about electoral turnout of non-Finnish citizens in local elections. In principle, the rules on eligibility are fairly similar to those for other Nordic states: Nordic and EU citizens are granted voting (and candidacy) rights if they are resident in Finland 51 days before the election, while other nationalities have a 2 year and 51 day limit.⁹⁶ In European Parliament elections, any EU citizen whose residence is in Finland 51 days before the election may choose to vote there – though somewhat paradoxically, he or she is required to register this fact 80 days before polling day.⁹⁷ Registration is automatic for municipal elections, but the voter must manually apply to register for European Parliament elections.

5.2.3.1 Municipal elections

EU citizens living in Finland are automatically registered on the electoral register for municipal elections. We can therefore gauge how much electoral weight the non-Finnish electorate has when measured as a proportion of all potential electors in each region.

In the April 2017 municipal election, foreigners accounted for 4.02 per cent of all people on the electoral roll. These comprised 176,661 non-Finns, of whom just under half (81,051) were EU citizens (including Danes and Swedes) and a small number (841) from the other Nordic states of Norway and Iceland. When the 311 municipalities in Finland are aggregated into their larger electoral districts, the proportion of mobile EU electors ranged from 0.59 per cent of the electorate in Savo-Karelia (in the south-east of the country bordering Russia), to 4.12 per cent in Helsinki.

Since automatic registration effectively means that all eligible non-Finns are on the electoral register, we can better gauge the electoral activity of foreign voters through turnout figures. These are not published at the individual municipal level, but are available aggregated up to the electoral district level, as shown in table 19. Turnout amongst the electorate as a whole in the municipal elections was 58.9 per cent, but among non-Finnish citizens it was much lower.

For EU citizens, the overall turnout was 17.6 per cent, but this headline rate hides some regional variation. The vast majority of EU mobile citizens in Finland live in Helsinki and Uusimaa, where the relative turnout rate of mobile EU citizens was respectively 18.5 and 13.5 per cent. In Lapland, Savo-Karelia, Oulu, and Central Finland – the northern and less populated area of the country – one in four EU voters cast a ballot. Although this was a higher relative turnout, only 11,080 out of the 81,051 non-Finnish electors lived in these districts, so these overall represented fewer voters. Amongst third-country nationals, turnout overall slightly higher than amongst EU citizens generally – but even in these cases only one in five people voted. The relative turnout rates of Nordic citizens were somewhat higher, but the rates for individual regions should not be overinterpreted, as the numbers are very small.

Table 19: Turnout rates municipal elections 2017, Finland (% of registered electorate in each category)

	Registered electorate	Turnout - Whole country	Electoral district											
			Helsinki	Uusimaa	Varsinais-Suomi	Satakunta	Häme	Pirkanmaa	South-East Finland	Savo-Karelia	Vaasa	Central Finland	Oulu	Lapland
Voters (total)	4,391,558	58.9%	61.8%	57.8%	60.1%	59.9%	57.9%	60.1%	56.4%	54.8%	63.8%	58.0%	56.9%	58.0%
<i>Of which</i>														
Citizens of other EU MS	81,051	17.6%	18.5%	13.5%	17.0%	19.6%	15.1%	22.4%	17.0%	25.2%	23.5%	25.2%	24.9%	26.0%
Citizens of Iceland and Norway	841	36.6%	32.3%	38.3%	32.2%	26.3%	14.3%	26.5%	41.7%	64.3%	58.3%	50.0%	34.3%	36.2%
Other foreigners	94,769	20.0%	17.8%	19.3%	23.0%	25.7%	17.4%	22.7%	17.7%	22.1%	26.6%	22.2%	20.2%	22.9%

Source: compiled by authors from Finnish electoral data⁹⁸

5.2.3.2 *European Parliament Elections*

Finns abroad can vote if they are not voting in another EU country, and emigrants account for about 5 per cent of the Finnish electorate. However, the extent to which these emigrants are represented by Finnish MEPs is very limited: the turnout rate in 2004, 2009 and 2014 was respectively 3.7 per cent, 3.9 per cent and 4.8 per cent (compared with an average of 40.8 per cent among the electorate as a whole).⁹⁹

The formal turnout rates amongst mobile EU citizens living in Finland are actually higher than amongst native citizens. Historically, there is no clear pattern with regard to gender differences: turnout was slightly higher amongst EU women than men on three occasions between 1994 and 2014, and the reverse was true on the other two occasions. To this, however, should be added an enormous caveat: since registration is not automatic, only those citizens who are actually registered are counted as the denominator for the turnout figure. In 2014, for instance, the official turnout rate for EU citizens was 44.6 per cent (compared with 39.1 per cent in general), but there were only 7,333 EU citizens registered to vote, out of an estimated 71,000 or so of voting age.¹⁰⁰ Thus the registration rate was just over 10 per cent, and the proportion of those eligible – rather than those registered – meant an effective turnout of just 4.3 per cent.

Overall, the main picture is of lack of engagement amongst mobile EU citizens and Finns abroad in the choice of Finnish representatives in Brussels.

5.3 **New Member States**

Of the 14.3 million or so mobile EU citizens living in other EU countries, only a small proportion live in the 13 states that have joined the EU since 1994. Based on 2017 Eurostat estimates, around 600,000 people of voting age living in the new Member States are from other EU countries (of which the Czech Republic alone accounts for around a third). In most new Member States, the domestic political impact of mobile EU citizens in it is fairly limited, on account of their lack of numbers relative to local populations.

There is only limited data in the new Member States on mobile EU citizens' electoral participation. Not only are the absolute numbers of mobile EU citizens relative to the national populations generally smaller than in Western Europe, but very low registration rates in some countries further diminish their electoral significance. A few countries do collect detailed information on registration and turnout of mobile EU citizens, but the small numbers involved make it difficult to draw any major conclusions from the available detail. Such is the case in Poland, where EU voters are counted on a separate list in municipal elections, and results are available for individual polling stations. From that it is possible to get a very detailed picture of the geographical spread of registered EU voters. Only 15 polling stations in the entire country that had more than five mobile EU voters in the same location (and 95 per cent of polling stations had none). Given that only 1,900 people were registered on the 'B' list (compared with 27,000 or so EU citizens of voting age) in 2018,¹⁰¹ their electoral significance in a country with 30 million voters was almost negligible. Of the registered voters, around three-quarters actually voted – but they represented only around 5 per cent of those eligible, and 0.01 per cent of the whole electorate.

The picture is similar in Bulgaria (where there were only 414 mobile EU voters registered in the entire country for the 2015 municipal elections, and 55 in European Parliament elections in 2014) and there is a lack of data for several other new Member States on the registration and turnout of mobile EU citizens in municipal elections.

One exception is Cyprus, which we discuss briefly in section 4.3.1.

5.3.1 Cyprus

Amongst the new Member States, Cyprus has a relatively large non-native population, with approximately a fifth of its population having been born abroad. The largest groups of non-Cypriots comprise sizeable communities of Greeks, British, Romanians and Bulgarians. In order to exercise electoral rights, EU citizens must have resided habitually in Cyprus (or, for EP elections, another EU Member State) for at least six months prior to the election. The immigration situation in Cyprus is somewhat different from other EU countries, given the country's division and the fact that some of the EU residents were originally migrant labourers from what were at the time third countries.¹⁰²

With these caveats in mind, it is worth noting that the potential electoral impact of mobile EU citizens is higher than in most EU Member States. Of the 93,000 or so eligible EU citizens, around 16,740 registered to vote in the 2016 municipal elections, representing a registration rate of 18 per cent or so (a slight increase on the 2011 figure of 12,333). Although this equals less than one in five of those eligible, it is in line with or slightly higher than some other countries with voluntary registration which have been examined above, and higher than most of the other new Member States for which data are available that do not have automatic registration. This figure does not reflect an even spread of EU nationalities, however: as with the demographics of the foreign community, the vast majority consisted of Greek, British, Romanian or Bulgarian electors. The only other nationalities which had more than 100 registered electors were Poles (174) and Germans (161).¹⁰³

Of the registered EU citizens, 10,442 voted, representing a turnout rate amongst those registered of 65.6 per cent, and around 12 per cent of those eligible.

Overall, the mobile EU votes represented 3 per cent of the votes cast in the Republic of Cyprus (and 2.5 per cent once the votes of the occupied territories were included as well). In particular municipalities, the electoral impact of the EU votes was higher. In particular, in several municipalities on the coast, the EU votes represented a sizeable proportion of the total votes cast: Paphos (16.1 per cent); Ayia Napa (18.5 per cent); Polis/Polis Chrysochous (25.9 per cent) and Peyia (36.1 per cent).¹⁰⁴

For European Parliament elections, some information is available on the registration and turnout of EU citizens in the 2009 and 2014 EP elections. There were 6,458 EU citizens registered in 2009 and 7,712 in 2014. As in many other countries, this represented a low proportion of the eligible population of mobile EU citizens (around 6-8 per cent). This represents a lower proportion than in municipal elections, once again with the qualification that some mobile EU citizens may have voted in their countries of citizenship. When broken down by nationality, once again it was the same four nationalities – Greek, British, Bulgarian and Romanian – who accounted for almost all these registrations. No other nationality had

more than 115 registered voters in 2014. On the basis that the small sample sizes for the other nationalities render any meaningful conclusions questionable, the comparative figures for these four nationalities are shown in table 20. Turnout rates were highest amongst Greek nationals – perhaps not surprising, given the linguistic similarities. There was no universal picture when it came to gender: turnout was slightly higher among registered Greek men than women, but the opposite way round amongst Romanians and fairly similar between both sexes for British and Bulgarian voters.

Table 20: Turnout in EP election 2014 among registered mobile EU voters (all nationalities with more than 1,000 registered voters), Cyprus

Nationality		Registered	Voted	Turnout as % of registered		
				Male	Female	Total
EL	Greece	3,593	1,437	41.3%	38.0%	40.0%
UK	United Kingdom	1,498	500	33.8%	33.0%	33.4%
BG	Bulgaria	1,168	318	27.3%	27.6%	27.2%
RO	Romania	1,026	310	27.0%	35.5%	30.2%

Source: Electoral Registrar’s office (2014)¹⁰⁵

6 General Observations

Through the cross-national overviews, and the more detailed picture from a handful of EU Member States, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions about the electoral importance of EU mobile voters in the municipal and European Parliament election processes.

First, there is considerable potential impact from mobile EU voters. Together they represent 14.3 million potential voters across the continent, a group that is larger than the populations of many Member States. Moreover, their particular political interests are arguably different from those of the vast majority of voters in Europe. These are the people who have taken advantage of their rights of freedom of movement as EU citizens, and it is important that they do not lose their democratic rights as a result.

Two patterns have become apparent from the foregoing. As noted above, there is a significant problem in establishing participation rates amongst EU citizens in other EU countries' elections; these data are not always recorded and rarely available easily. Lack of awareness of mobile EU citizens' electoral rights is compounded by lack of information about their uptake. Where we have this information, the indications are that the participation of mobile EU citizens in local and European Parliament elections is at best a marginal issue in most countries.

There may be several reasons for this. As noted in the FAIREU report on obstacles to participation,¹⁰⁶ bureaucratic hurdles may make it harder for mobile EU voters to participate in elections. For example, the need to register separately, often with complicated procedures and extra steps; lack of understanding of the political system and language of the country; and lack of identification with political parties all act as disincentives to participation. In the case of candidacy – though that has not been the main focus of this report – the interaction between political party legislation and electoral laws in practice often makes it difficult (and in some countries, impossible) actually to stand for election, even if this right exists in principle.

The figures presented in this report confirm that **registration rates in countries where non-citizen residents are not registered automatically are significantly lower than in countries where they are** (though often the effort involved in registering in the first place means that registered voters often vote). At the same time, the key country analyses allowed us to go deeper in establishing the particular issues that affect turnout and participation. To draw some of the observations from individual countries together, we can highlight a number of issues that were apparent in several cases:

Nationality of origin. Where breakdown by nationality is possible, citizens from the new Member States generally seem less likely to register (and/or vote) than those from the older Member States. This pattern is seen in Denmark, Spain and Luxembourg in particular. (In Cyprus it is difficult to generalise from the available data, because of the small numbers of citizens registered from most countries.) There may be two reasons for this. First, differential turnout rates amongst citizens of new and old Member States are consistent with the national-level patterns inside these countries: turnout rates in all types of elections in the new Member States are (with a few exceptions) generally lower than in equivalent elections in Western Europe. It may simply be that citizens of these countries are also less likely than their West European counterparts to vote when they move to other states. A second explanation may lie in the type of migration undertaken by different nationalities. A large wave of intra-EU

mobility in recent years has been from the new Member States to the older ones to fill short-term gaps in the labour market, as well as from older Member States most affected by the recession. As such, it is likely that people are less likely to vote if they are transiently in the country or feel that it is unlikely they will stay long-term.

Length of time in country. Related to the above point, there are few countries for which the data on EU voters' turnout is sufficiently detailed to be able to differentiate between cohorts and to know how long mobile EU voters have been in the country. However, the data from Sweden and Luxembourg indicate that there is a strong connection between the length of time a mobile EU voter has lived in the country, and the likelihood that he or she will vote. This is to some extent logical: as people settle in and gain a deeper understanding of their new country, they are arguably more likely to form an opinion on how their local area is governed, gain a greater understanding of its political system, and wish to influence it. At the same time, it was seen in the Swedish case that length of time in the country is not independent of other factors: certain nationalities are more likely to have migrated recently and others a long time ago, depending on general migration patterns in different eras.

Citizenship. Although the focus of this study has been on mobile EU citizens, whose electoral rights in another EU country derive from their EU citizenship, the data from Sweden and Denmark indicate that those who have acquired the citizenship of their country of residence are about twice as likely to vote as other mobile EU citizens. To some extent this should be unsurprising; citizenship gives an immigrant a long-term stake in the country that a non-citizen does not necessarily have.¹⁰⁷ The process of citizenship acquisition may also involve a degree of civic learning, further boosting affinity with the political system.

Gender. Where breakdowns by gender are available, it is difficult to establish a clear pattern of its effect on electoral turnout of mobile EU citizens that is generalisable across the EU. Other factors (such as nationality, length in country and citizenship status) appear to make a much larger difference. Where gender differences are apparent in particular nationalities or age groups, they are often cancelled out across the mobile EU body as a whole, or vary from election to election in the same country.

Concentration of mobile EU citizens. In certain regions, the potential electoral impact of mobile EU citizens on electoral outcomes is higher than in others. Although the overall proportion of EU citizens among the electorate is generally fairly small (and exaggeratedly so due to low registration rates), certain geographical clusters of intra-EU migration can make mobile EU citizens electorally relevant in some areas. The maps of Belgium and Sweden, for instance, showed that the number of EU citizens is generally higher in the border regions in these countries (generally nationals from the country on the other side of the border) while the potential impact of Greek citizens in Paphos in Cyprus, which had one of the highest proportions of mobile EU citizens in the country, was the subject of some local press discussion in 2016.¹⁰⁸ Whilst this does not always translate into higher *relative* registration or turnout levels (as a proportion of all who could theoretically participate), such residential or nationality concentration means that their potential electoral impact is higher in such municipalities than in most places.

Type of election. As noted in the introduction, the electoral rights afforded to mobile EU citizens through EU legislation only affect local and European Parliament elections in each

country. The enfranchisement of non-national citizens in national-level elections, as well as external voting rights outside the country in national and European Parliament elections, is a matter for national governments.

If mobile EU citizens are taken to include not only EU citizens in their country of residence, but also national citizens participating in their own countries European Parliament elections from abroad, it is difficult to compare overall participation rates in European Parliament with municipal elections amongst mobile EU voters. In the majority of the 28 states it is in principle possible for mobile EU citizens to vote either in their country of residence or of origin, subject to being able actually to cast a ballot in practice. In the countries that have been examined, it is without exception the case that the registration and turnout rates amongst resident EU citizens in each country have been lower in European Parliament than in municipal elections. However, without knowing how many other mobile EU citizens chose not to register in their country of residence but still cast a ballot in their home country's EP election, it is impossible to know how many mobile EU citizens have participated in EP elections in total. Unfortunately, such data are very dispersed and incomplete.

7 Policy Recommendations

It is not the intention in this report to reproduce the existing FAIREU policy recommendations *verbatim*, as these can be read elsewhere. Based on the detailed investigation of turnout presented above, however, this study highlights areas in which there is currently a lack of participation in the political process amongst mobile EU voters that could be improved by policy changes.

First, there are several inconsistencies that affect mobile EU voter participation in rules on **eligibility**:

- Municipal elections:
 - The definition of local government units used in Directive 94/80/EC is interpreted differently in each EU country, which means that voting rights (and thus influence on local government policy agendas) are granted differentially depending on the country of residence.
 - Although this report has focused primarily on voting and on turnout levels in local legislative elections, the prohibition on standing for executive office in some countries creates a differential scope for the participation of mobile EU candidates in local public life as leaders.
- European Parliament elections:
 - The fact that external voting rights are a matter for national governments means that some mobile EU citizens have a choice of which country to vote in, while others can only vote in their country of residence. Similarly, some countries allow their mobile citizens abroad to vote only if they are resident in other EU countries, and others in principle allow their external citizens to vote from anywhere in the world. Thus the boundary of the *demos* – and the extent to which the EP is chosen on a residence- or citizenship-based franchise – is different for different EU citizens who live outside the EU, depending on their nationality.

As we have seen, registration rates and participation rates in EP elections in countries of residence are generally very low. Thus the main channel of participation for mobile EU citizens in EP elections appears to be as external voters in their own countries.

Cognisant of the different powers and structures of local government in each country, and of the sovereignty of each state to determine its own relationship with its citizens, we nonetheless draw particular attention to some of the FAIREU policy recommendations that would positively impact these inconsistencies:

- Allowing non-citizen residents to vote and stand as candidates in all types of municipalities;
- Extending the right to vote for non-citizens also to the regional level, in those countries where non-citizen residents from the EU do not have this right but where important decisions are taken;
- All Member States should introduce the franchise for non-resident citizens in European Parliament elections.¹⁰⁹

Registration requirements vary from country to country and can act as a significant barrier to participation. If a voter is not registered in the first place, he or she cannot participate in voting on election day. As has been seen above, registration rates are lower where registration is not automatic. Moreover, in many cases the registration deadline for mobile EU citizens (and other non-citizen residents or non-resident citizens) is long before the election campaign is even underway.

Not every state in the EU has centralised personal registers, but where the process of civic registration and electoral registration are separate, we endorse the FAIREU policy recommendation that that there could be greater alignment of these two processes and that more use could be made of automated technology to connect civic registration and electoral registration.

This report has not directly examined the effect of **outreach** campaigns, but some of the findings from the country studies reiterate the value of them. First, it is clear that participation rates amongst EU citizens are not increasing over time. Although there was generally a surge in participation in the first few years after the Directives were passed, this had levelled off by the mid-2000s and the data presented in sections 3 and 4 indicates that it now fluctuates from election to election, without a clear upward trajectory (and even falling, in some cases). This indicates the importance of voter awareness. As noted in section 4.1.1, registration increased in Brussels in the 2018 Belgian municipal election and fell everywhere else in Belgium, which coincided with the *VoteBrussels* campaign in the Belgian capital (part of the FAIREU project). Similarly, turnout rates in Cyprus among Greek citizens were higher than other nationalities', as noted in section 4.3.1. Therefore, it is recommended that a) information on registration processes for European Parliament and municipal elections is available readily; and (b) that it is available in other EU languages as well as the local language (particularly for European Parliament elections).

Whilst there is an expense relating to the translation costs, this could be minimised by producing central standardised information that is then distributed to local government and electoral registration units. (Since different nationalities are more or less concentrated in different countries, if resources are scarce the focus could be on translating information into the main EU working languages that are spoken widely, plus the languages of the main nationality groups resident in the country.)

There is a need for **greater transparency, both in promoting EU voting rights and in tracking the participation of mobile EU citizens**. Not only is there low awareness of mobile EU voters' rights amongst ordinary citizens, but obtaining information on their uptake is far from straightforward. The Commission's own report on participation was only able to obtain basic breakdowns of participation levels for ten countries' municipal elections directly from the Member States' electoral authorities. This report – which has been based on extensive investigation over several months of publicly-available official sources of information in 28 countries in 23 languages – has provided more detail, but still cannot provide a complete picture as not all parts of the puzzle exist. Moreover, it should not be necessary to have to invest so comprehensively in order to track the uptake of a basic citizen right that is contained in the Treaties.

As already noted, record-keeping is more detailed in some countries than others. In several countries, there appears to be no publicly available data on the participation of mobile EU citizens in the electoral process. In some cases, the data may not even be compiled in the first place due to national restrictions or bureaucratic obstacles.

We therefore recommend greater transparency on data collection across the Member States. A starting point would be a regular questionnaire to national electoral authorities after each round of municipal elections to collect basic indicators such as number of eligible EU citizens, numbers registered, and (if possible to discern) turnout levels. For European Parliament elections, information on the registration and turnout levels of voters abroad should be compiled and cross-referenced with the national returns on mobile EU voters voting within each country. Regular publication of such details could in turn lead to greater awareness and promotion of mobile EU voter participation.

Finally, there is a need for **more research**, particularly of a qualitative nature, on why uptake of mobile EU voter rights is so low. The data presented in this report indicate the problem – the phenomenon of generally low participation rates, and the correlates of turnout with nationality, gender, length of residence, etc. But in order to improve democratic quality, we need to understand the reasons for lower or higher uptake of electoral rights within these different groups. By presenting the data, this report lays a baseline for measurement of future electoral participation and allows us to identify particular groups whose input should be sought to better understand the processes that lead to it.

Endnotes

¹ Treaty on European Union (Consolidated Version), Art. 2. *Official Journal of the European Union (OJ)*, C326, 26.10.2012.

² Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Consolidated Version), Art. 20 (2)(a) and (b). *Official Journal of the European Union*, 26 October 2012, Vol. 55, C326.

³ The United Kingdom and Ireland give reciprocal rights to each other's citizens in national parliamentary elections (but not in referenda or presidential elections, in Ireland's case). The UK's provision of voting rights to Commonwealth citizens coincidentally encompasses Maltese and Cypriot nationals – but not on the basis of their EU citizenship.

⁴ Council Directive 93/109/EC of 6 December 1993, OJ L329, 30.12.1993 (p. 34), as amended by Council Directive 2013/1/EU of 20 December 2012, OJ L26/27 26.1.2013.

⁵ For detailed summaries of these differences, see the Global Citizenship Observatory (2017), *Conditions for Electoral Rights Database* (Florence: EUI), <http://globalcit.eu/conditions-for-electoral-rights/> (accessed 20 June 2019).

⁶ Cyprus abolished this obligation in 2017 and the other three countries do not, in practice, enforce any sanctions for failure to vote. For a summary of the registration-related obstacles, see Ostling, A. (2019), *FAIR EU synthesis report: electoral rights for mobile EU citizens - challenges and facilitators of implementation* (Florence: RSCAS). Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/60991> (accessed 20 June 2019).

⁷ Council Directive 94/80/EC of 19 December 1994, OJ L 368, 31.12.1994, p.38, as adapted in Council Directive 2013/19/EU, OJ 10.6.2013 L158/201.

⁸ European Commission (2012), 'Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive 94/80/EC on the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals', COM(2012)99 final, 9 March 2012, p.8. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0099:FIN:EN:PDF>, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁹ European Commission (2018), 'Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the application of Directive 94/80/EC on the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections', COM(2018)44 final, 25 January 2018. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0044&from=en>, accessed 20 June 2019.

¹⁰ Ostling, A. (2019), *FAIREU synthesis report*.

¹¹ Ostling, A. (2019), *FAIREU synthesis report*.

¹² Eurobarometer (2016), 'European Union Citizenship' (Brussels). Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2016-flash-eurobarometer-430-citizenship_en.pdf, accessed 31 January 2019.

¹³ European Commission (2018), 'Report on the application of Directive 94/80/EC', COM(2018)44 final.

¹⁴ The United Kingdom was expected to leave the EU in March 2019, and was not originally expected to participate in the European Parliament election. Its original departure date was postponed and resulted in an unexpected EP election campaign there. The exact final timing of its eventual departure is uncertain at the time of writing.

¹⁵ See Ostling, A. (2019), *FAIREU synthesis report*; Arrighi, J-Th., Bauböck, R., Collyer, M., Hutcheson, D., Moraru, M., Khadar, L. and Shaw, J. (2013), *Franchise and electoral participation of third country citizens residing the European Union and of EU citizens residing in third countries* (Brussels: European Parliament/Directorate General for Internal Policies), Study 474.411. (Available online: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/474441/IPOL-AFCO_ET\(2013\)474441_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/474441/IPOL-AFCO_ET(2013)474441_EN.pdf), accessed 20 June 2019).

¹⁶ Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services/European Commission (2015), *Study on the Conduct of the 2014 Elections to the European Parliament* (Brussels: European Commission), pp.72-73. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/final_report_2014_ep_elections_study_cses_10_march_2015_en.pdf, accessed 16 June 2019); European Commission (2018), ‘Report on the application of Directive 94/80/EC’, COM(2018)44 final.

¹⁷ For example, the data on Denmark published by Copenhagen University and based on detailed electoral register data is much more comprehensive than the official figures available on electoral commission websites. [Hansen, K.M. (2018), *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University/CVAP). Available online: https://samf.ku.dk/nyheder/ny-analyse-vi-er-paa-vej-mod-et-demokratisk-a-og-b-hold/KV_RV17_valgdeltagelse.pdf, accessed 27 June 2019).

¹⁸ An example is the summary of electoral registration of EU citizens in Bulgaria in 2011 (248 mobile EU citizens), which was given in a press release: Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (2011) ‘Във връзка с приключилия етап от дейностите на МРРБ, ГД “ГРАО”, свързани с подготовката и провеждането на изборите в страната на 23.10.2011 г., Ви уведомяваме следното: [Regarding the completed stage of the activities of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, DG GRAO, related to the preparation and holding of the elections in the country on 23.10.2011, we inform you of the following:]’. Available online: <https://www.mrrb.bg/bg/vuv-vruzka-s-prikluchiliya-etap-ot-dejnostite-na-mrrb-gd-grao-svurzani-s-podgotovkata-i-provejdane-to-na-izborite-v-stranata-na-23-10-2011-g-vi-uedomyavame-slednoto/>, accessed 31 January 2019.

¹⁹ See <https://faireu.ecas.org/reports/>.

²⁰ Hutcheson, D. and Russo, L. (2019), *FAIR-EU Data Inventory on Electoral Registration and Turnout in Most Recent Municipal Elections prior to 1 January 2019, v.1.0* (Brussels: FAIR-EU). Available online.

²¹ As an example, Spain’s 2014 European Parliament election electoral register (excluding non-resident voters) contained 34,821,466 voters, according to the official results published by the Ministry of the Interior (<http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/min/export.html?jsessionid=D8FE25B23A4E7B9F0AD6E021E43F5E40?method=exportFormacionPolitica4C&contentType=PDF>) and 34,822,717 according to the ‘definitive’ electoral register data of the National Institute of Statistics (<https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p10/a2014/10/&file=0104.px>), both accessed 6 June 2019.

²² The United Kingdom has no unified national electoral register, but separate rolls maintained by 380 Electoral Registration Officers in Great Britain, plus one in Northern Ireland [The Electoral Commission (2017), *Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election. Report on the UK Parliamentary general election held on 8 June 2017* (London: The Electoral Commission), p.3. Available online: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/electoral-registration-at-the-uk-general-election-2017>, accessed 20 June 2019]. Moreover, there are wildly differing estimates of how many UK citizens live overseas, and how many of them would qualify under the ‘15-year’ rule.

²³ Aside from the difficulty of compiling the information, no details of citizenship are recorded in the UK electoral registers, and hence the statistics on mobile EU voters are not held by the Office of National Statistics [Office for National Statistics (2018), ‘EU citizens registered to vote’, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/eucitizensregisteredtovote>, accessed 26 June 2019].

²⁴ A pilot study along these lines was conducted in the UK in 2011, but was able to cover only a handful of municipalities. See Collard, S. (2013), ‘Evaluating European Citizenship through participation of Non-National European Citizens in local elections: case studies of France and the UK’, *Cuadernos Europeos de Deusto*, No. 48, pp.135-73.

²⁵ Carrubba, C., & Timpone, R. J. (2005), ‘Explaining vote switching across first-and second-order elections: Evidence from Europe’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(3), pp.260-281; Reif, K., & Schmitt, H. (1980), ‘Nine second-order national elections – a conceptual framework for the analysis of European Election results’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 8(1), pp.3-44.

²⁶ Franklin, M. N., & Hobolt, S. B. (2011), ‘The legacy of lethargy: How elections to the European Parliament depress turnout’, *Electoral Studies* 30(1), pp.67–76.

²⁷ Golder, S.N., Lago, I., Blais, A., Gidengil, E., and Gschwend, T. (2017), *Multi-Level Electoral Politics: Beyond the Second-Order Election Model* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Lefevere, J., & Van Aelst, P.

(2014), 'First-order, second-order or third-rate? A comparison of turnout in European, local and national elections in the Netherlands', *Electoral Studies*, 35, pp.159-70.

²⁸ Nord, L. (2019), 'Second thoughts on second-order elections', in *DEMICOM rapport Euroreflections* (Mid Sweden University, DEMICOM), p.47. Available online: https://euroreflections.se/globalassets/ovrigt/euroreflections/euroreflections_v3.pdf, accessed 28 June 2019.

²⁹ Gaus, D., & Seubert, S. (2016), 'Report on voter turnout for the European Parliament and Political Equality in the EU', *bEUcitizen Project Deliverable*, 8. Available online: https://beucitizen.eu/wp-content/uploads/D8.6-Report-on-voter-turnout-for-the-European-Parliament-Political-Equality-in-the-EU_31.3.16.pdf, accessed 20 June 2019.

³⁰ Eurostat data were used as to approximate the number of potential EU voters, unless a verifiably more accurate number was available from the Member State itself (e.g., Ireland in 2009, when the Eurostat figure for the number of non-Irish citizens was almost three times lower than the national census records indicated). Eurostat data on resident non-national EU citizens in each country were utilised (dataset migr_pop1ctz: Available online http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_pop1ctz&lang=en). Eurostat data are classified in 5-year bands, which means that the closest approximation to a voting-age population (aged 18 and over, and 16 and over in Austria) can be obtained by taking the number of EU citizens over the age of 15 and subtracting the 15 to 17 year-olds (15 year-olds only in Austria). As a proxy measure, this was assumed to be 3/5 (and 1/5 in Austria) of the number of 15-19 year-olds. This methodology comes with three caveats: (1) It assumes a uniform distribution of people across the 15-20 year-old age band; (2) Eurostat data are based on returns on 1 January of the year of the election, which means that the census data and final electoral register are not calculated at the same moment; and (3) it does not take account of additional restrictions (e.g., on minimum length of residence) that may disqualify some of the voting-age EU population from electoral rights. Notwithstanding these limitations, in the few cases that it is possible to cross-reference the population estimate with actual election registers in automatic registration systems, the figures are very close.

³¹ For a full list of sources, see the FAIR-EU turnout database (<https://faireu.ecas.org/>). 'Estimated EU population of voting age' reflects the number of resident EU citizens over the age of 18 (16 in Austria), calculated from Eurostat data, unless verifiably more accurate national data are available. This indicator does not take account of other restrictions that may prevent some people over 18 from eligibility (such as minimum residence requirements). Where registration rates exceed 100 per cent, this is presumably due to inaccurate (underestimated) data by national authorities on the number of mobile EU citizens present in the country. It is assumed that electoral authorities could not register somebody unless they exist, so the number of resident mobile EU citizens could not logically be lower than the number registered to vote. In countries where automatic registration means that the entire population of eligible citizens is registered, this is recorded as the denominator instead of the Eurostat estimates. No data are included for Germany, Austria and the UK since their local elections take place on a rolling basis and there is no definitive census date which can be used, nor centralised data on turnout.

³² With the caveat that the Swedish figure includes all registered non-Swedish voters. EU citizens probably account for about a third of that total, but the exact number is not recorded separately. See Hutcheson, D.S. and Bevelander, P. (2018), *FAIREU Key Country Report: Electoral Participation in Sweden* (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS), p.10. Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/59567>, accessed 20 June 2019.

³³ For Bulgaria, we are grateful to the Central Electoral Commission for compiling the information in response to a request from the FAIREU project. Aleksieva, I. and Solakova, S. (2019), Central Electoral Commission, letter to Derek Hutcheson, Ref.№ CEC-07-25/07.02.2019.

³⁴ Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă (2009), Raport asupra organizării și desfășurării alegerilor membrilor din România în Parlamentul European din 7 iunie 2009 (Bucharest: AEP), pp.49-51.

³⁵ Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (2015), *Study on the Conduct of the 2014 Elections*, pp.72-73.

³⁶ For a detailed description, see Russo, L. (2018). *FAIREU Key country report: electoral participation in Belgium* (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS); Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/59404> (accessed 5 June 2019).

³⁷ See Deschouwer, K. (2012). *The politics of Belgium. Governing a divided society* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

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- ³⁸ Vintila, D., Lafleur, J.-M. and Nikolic, L. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Belgium* (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS). Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/59565>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ³⁹ Service public fédéral Intérieur: Direction des Elections (2018), 'Inscriptions. Situation au 31/07/2018-01/08/2018'. Available online: <https://stat.elections.fgov.be/fr>, accessed 5 June 2019.
- ⁴⁰ Service public fédéral Intérieur: Direction des Elections (2018), 'Inscriptions'; Vintila, D., Lafleur, J.-M. and Nikolic, L. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Belgium*, p.19.
- ⁴¹ Breakdown by gender obtained on paid request from the Belgian SPF Intérieur/FOD Binnenlandse Zaken, Direction générale Institutions Population/Algemene Directie Instellingen en Bevolking, Service Elections/Dienst Verkiezingen.
- ⁴² Note that these figures represent the mean registration rates across the municipalities, rather than the absolute registration numbers. Because each municipality is equally weighted, these numbers may differ from the aggregate figures for each region.
- ⁴³ Including EU and non-EU foreigners, non-citizens of Luxembourg comprised 288,234 (47.9%) of its total 602,005 inhabitants [CEFIS (2019), *Les étrangers dans les communes au 1er janvier 2019*, <http://www.cefis.lu/resources/Carte-lux.pdf>, accessed 4 June 2019].
- ⁴⁴ In brief, these allow states with over 20% non-nationals to impose restrictions on candidacy and voting rights, for a period not exceeding the length of the mandate period for voting rights and twice that length for candidacy.
- ⁴⁵ Loi du 28 décembre 1995 fixant les modalités de participation aux élections communales des citoyens non-luxembourgeois de l'Union Européenne. *MEMORIAL - Journal Officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, A – No. 101 (28 December 1995), Column 2551. Available online: <http://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/1995/12/28/n1/jo>, accessed 4 June 2019.
- ⁴⁶ Besch, S. and Scuto, D. (2019), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Luxembourg*. (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS). Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/60987>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁴⁷ Besch, S. and Dubajic, N. (2018), *Les élections communales d'octobre 2017* (Luxembourg: Centre d'Etude et de Formation Interculturelles et Sociales (CEFIS)), RED No.22, pp.21-22. Available online: <http://www.cefis.lu/resources/RED22.pdf>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁴⁸ Government of Luxembourg, 'S'inscrire sur les listes électorales pour les élections communales'. Available online: <https://guichet.public.lu/fr/citoyens/citoyennete/elections/elections-communales/inscription-listes-electorales-communales.html>, accessed 4 June 2019.
- ⁴⁹ Besch, S. and Dubajic, N. (2018), *Les élections communales d'octobre 2017*, pp.21-22.
- ⁵⁰ Besch, S. and Dubajic, N. (2018), *Les élections communales d'octobre 2017*, p.26.
- ⁵¹ Besch, S., Dubajic, N., Manço, A. and Schmidt, M. (2012), *Les élections communales d'octobre 2011* (Luxembourg: Centre d'Etude et de Formation Interculturelles et Sociales (CEFIS)), RED No.17, p.33; Besch, S. and Dubajic, N. (2018), *Les élections communales d'octobre 2017*, pp.21-22.
- ⁵² Besch, S. and Dubajic, N. (2018), *Les élections communales d'octobre 2017*, pp.19-22.
- ⁵³ Manço, A., Gillen, L. and Mertz, F. (2015), *La participation politique des étrangers au Luxembourg*. (Luxembourg: Centre d'Etude et de Formation Interculturelles et Sociales (CEFIS)), RED No.19. Available online: <https://jepeuxvoter.public.lu/dam-assets/publications/red-n19-la-participation-politique-des-etrangers-au-luxembourg-recherche-migralux-2014.pdf>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁵⁴ Manço, A., Gillen, L. and Mertz, F. (2015), *La participation politique des étrangers au Luxembourg*, p.14.
- ⁵⁵ Web link: <https://www.ine.es/dyns/INEbase/en/listaoperaciones.htm>
- ⁵⁶ See Rodríguez, A. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Spain*. Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS). Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/60172>, accessed 20 June 2019; regulation available on the INE website: https://www.ine.es/ss/Satellite?L=en_GB&c=Page&cid=1254735788994&p=1254735788994&pagename=CensoElectoral%2FINELayout, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁵⁷ The countries in question (in order of registered voter numbers in the 2019 municipal elections) are Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Norway (to which a shorter 3-year residence period applies), South Korea, Cape Verde, Iceland, New Zealand, and Trinidad and Tobago. Whilst there are between 2000 and 4000 voters from each of the first five, there are only a few hundred voters from the remainder. In 2019, there was only a single Trinidadian and Tobagonian registered. Non-EU voters must refresh their application for every election, and cannot stand as candidates. [Oficina del Censo Electoral, Elecciones mayo de 2019, ‘Número de electores extranjeros residentes en España, por nacionalidad’, https://www.ine.es/oficina_censo/elecmae2019/elecmae2019_tab8_lv.xlsx, accessed 6 June 2019].

⁵⁸ The figures shown here are the definitive lists (‘Número definitivo de electores’) for each election, available online <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2003/10/&file=0106.px> (2003); <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2011/10/&file=0104.px> (2007); <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2007/10/&file=0104.px> (2011); <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2015/10/&file=0104.px> (2015); https://www.ine.es/oficina_censo/elecmae2019/elecmae2019_tab2_ne.xlsx (2019 – provisional). Note that the total figures in the electoral census vary slightly from the headline electorate figure in the official results published at <http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/min/export.html?sessionid=A811F86B84CFCD0999773B91613D9D7A?method=exportFormacionPolitica4C&contentType=PDF> (2011) and <http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/min/export.html?sessionid=2D27FF4AEEA92AB54548A50D8BD01AC3?method=exportFormacionPolitica4C&contentType=PDF> (2015). All websites accessed 6 June 2019.

⁵⁹ Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2019), ‘Población por país de residencia, sexo y grupos de edad (quinquenales)’. Available online: <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t20/p85001/a2019/10/&file=01001.px>, accessed 6 June 2019).

⁶⁰ Rodríguez, A. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Spain*, pp.8-9.

⁶¹ Detailed electoral census records are available from the National Statistical Institute, in many different combinations (‘running’ lists, by province and municipality, and final figures for each election). The figures shown here are the definitive lists (‘Número definitivo de electores’) for each election, available online: <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p10/a2009/10/&file=0104.px> (2009), <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p10/a2014/10/&file=0104.px> (2014) and https://www.ine.es/oficina_censo/elecmae2019/elecmae2019_tab1_ne.xlsx (2019 - provisional) (all accessed 6 June 2019).

⁶² Note that the percentages represent the proportion of the electorate in each municipality that consists of non-Spanish voters – not (as in figures 3 to 6) the relative proportion of eligible non-Spanish citizens who have registered. The scale is not linear because of the very large proportion of municipalities in which the proportion of foreigners is relatively low, and the extreme range.

⁶³ Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2015). ‘Distribución del CERE por edad y sexo. Total Nacional’, Elecciones municipales y autonómicas de 24 de mayo de 2015’, <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2015/10/&file=0401a.px> (accessed 12 June 2019).

⁶⁴ Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011), ‘Población extranjera por sexo, edad (grupos quinquenales) y país de nacionalidad’, <http://www.ine.es/jaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/t20/e244/avance/p01/11/&file=03008.px>, accessed 12 June 2019; Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011), ‘Elecciones municipales y autonómicas de 22 de mayo de 2011: Electores del CERE por nacionalidad’, <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2011/10/&file=0310.px>, accessed 12 June 2019.

⁶⁵ This may be slightly affected by the fact that the younger cohorts of potential foreign voters contained proportionately more third-country nationals than the older cohorts, and not all of them may have met the residence criteria.

⁶⁶ Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011), ‘Población extranjera por sexo, edad (grupos quinquenales) y país de nacionalidad’, <http://www.ine.es/jaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/t20/e244/avance/p01/11/&file=03008.px>, accessed 12 June 2019) and ‘Elecciones municipales y autonómicas de 22 de mayo de 2011: Electores del CERE por nacionalidad’, <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t44/p06/a2011/10/&file=0310.px>, accessed 12 June 2019. Note that the population statistics from the 2011 census were published in 5-year categories, so – as with the Eurostat population statistics used in section 3 – the number of 18-19 year-olds is estimated by assuming it to be two-fifths of the 15-19 year-old category. The registration numbers are based on actual reported figures.

⁶⁷ Elklit, J., Møller, B., Svensson, P. & Togeby, L. (2000) *Hvem stemmer og hvem stemmer ikke? En analyse af valgdeltagelsen i København og Århus ved kommunalbestyrelsesvalgene i 1997* (Magtudredningen); Elklit, J., Møller, B., Svensson, P. & Togeby, L. (2005) *Gensyn med sofavælgerne. Valgdeltagelse i Danmark* (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag).

⁶⁸ See Hansen, K.M. (2018), *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017*.

⁶⁹ Bhatti, Y. and Hansen, K.M. (2010) *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunalvalget 17 november 2009. Beskrivende analyser af valgdeltagelsen baseret på registerdata* (Copenhagen: Institut for Statskundskab. Københavns Universitet), p.32; Bhatti, Y., Dahlgaard, J.O., Hansen, J.H. & Hansen, K.M. (2014), *Hvem stemte og hvem blev hjemme? Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunalvalget 19 november 2013. Beskrivende analyser af valgdeltagelsen baseret på registerdata* (Copenhagen: Center for Valg og Partier. Institut for Statskundskab. Københavns Universitet), p.48; Hansen, K.M. (2018), *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017*, p.18.

⁷⁰ The 'Other Nordic' states in the classification are the non-EU Nordic states: Iceland and Norway (non-EU). Sweden and Finland are included in the EU figure.

⁷¹ Hansen, K.M. (2018), *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017*, p.38.

⁷² Hansen, K.M. (2018), *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017*, p.19.

⁷³ Bhatti, Y. and Hansen, K.M. (2010) *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunalvalget 17 november 2009*, pp.35 and 41.

⁷⁴ Hansen, K.M. (2018), *Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017*, pp.36-7.

⁷⁵ Hansen, K.M., *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Denmark* (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS), p.13. Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/58367>, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁷⁶ Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (2015), *Study on the Conduct of the 2014 Elections*.

⁷⁷ Bhatti, J., Dahlgaard, J.O., Hansen J.H. and Hansen, K.M. (2015), *Hvem stemte til EP-valget 2014? Valgdeltagelsen ved Europa-Parlamentsvalget 25. maj 2014. Beskrivende analyser af valgdeltagelsen baseret på registerdata* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University/CVAP), p.21.

⁷⁸ Local Government Act (2017), 'Kommunallag', Law 2017:725, Chapter 4, Art. 3. Full text (with amendments up to SFS 2018:1350) available online: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/kommunallag-2017725_sfs-2017-725. The exception is that auditors of the municipality are not eligible for election to its assembly (Chapter 4, Art. 5), to avoid a conflict of interests.

⁷⁹ This section draws to some extent on Hutcheson, D. and Bevelander, P. (2018), *FAIREU Key Country Report: Sweden*. The authors thank Pieter Bevelander for his help in calculating turnout figures for Sweden from the SCB database.

⁸⁰ Official statistics from Statistics Sweden (SCB), 'Entitled to vote in Municipal Council elections, estimate in thousands by country of citizenship/region, sex and election year', Matrix ME0105M3, <http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/sq/54676>, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁸¹ Valmyndigheten [Swedish Election Authority] (2018), 'Val till kommunfullmäktige - Ålder och kön', Available online: <https://data.val.se/val/val2018/alkon/K/rike/alderkon.html#rostberalkon>, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁸² Statistics Sweden (SCB), 'Befolkningsstatistik i sammandrag 1960–2017'. Available online: <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/helarsstatistik--riket/befolkningsstatistik-i-sammandrag/>, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁸³ Statistics Sweden (SCB), 'Andel röstberättigade efter kön, medborgarskapsland och valår', Table ME0104F1. Available online: <http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/sq/56823>, accessed 20 June 2019.

⁸⁴ Statistics Sweden (SCB), 'Andel personer med utländsk bakgrund, 2017 jämfört med 2016'. Available online: <http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/topplistor-kommuner/andel-personer-med-utlandsk-bakgrund/>, accessed 19 June 2019; Statistics Sweden (SCB), 'Utrikes födda efter län, kommun och födelseland 31 december 2017'. Available online: <http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/helarsstatistik--kommun-lan-och-riket/utrikes-fodda-efter-lan-kommun-och-fodelseland-31-december/>, accessed 20 June 2019..

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- ⁸⁵ Valmyndigheten [Swedish Election Authority] (2010), 'Val till landstingsfullmäktige - Ålder och kön'. Available online: <https://data.val.se/val/val2010/alkon/L/rike/alderkon.html>, accessed 20 June 2019; Valmyndigheten (2014), 'Val till landstingsfullmäktige - Ålder och kön'. Available online: <https://data.val.se/val/val2014/alkon/L/rike/alderkon.html>, accessed 20 June 2019; Valmyndigheten (2018), 'Val till landstingsfullmäktige - Ålder och kön'. Available online: <https://data.val.se/val/val2018/alkon/L/rike/alderkon.html>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁸⁶ Statistics Sweden (SCB) 'Svenskt valdeltagande under hundra år', *Demokratistatistik Rapport 13*, pp.58-59. Available online: https://www.scb.se/contentassets/8199ca5424ea40b78500f55789858edd/me0105_2014a01_br_me09br1502.pdf, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁸⁷ For more on the methodology and sample, see Statistics Sweden (SCB) (2015), 'Vilka valde att välja? Deltagandet i valen 2014', *Demokratistatistik rapport 19*. Available online: https://www.scb.se/contentassets/8199ca5424ea40b78500f55789858edd/me0105_2014a01_br_me09br1502.pdf, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁸⁸ 'Nordic' in the Swedish electoral figures includes Finland and Sweden (EU members) as well as Iceland and Norway (non-EU). The EU figures are for the non-Nordic member states.
- ⁸⁹ See e.g., the information on Denmark in section 4.2.1 and Anthony M. Messina (2006) 'The Political Incorporation of Immigrants in Europe: Trends and Implications', in A.M. Messina and G. Lahav (eds), *The Migration Reader, Exploring Politics and Policies* (Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers): 470-93.
- ⁹⁰ Hutcheson, D. and Bevelander, P. (2018), *FAIREU Key Country Report: Sweden*.
- ⁹¹ Pieter Bevelander and Ravi Pendakur (2011) 'Voting and Social Inclusion in Sweden', *International Migration*, 49(4), pp.67-92.
- ⁹² Statistics Sweden (SCB) (2015) 'Vilka valde att välja?', p.71.
- ⁹³ Swedish Election Law (2005), 'Vallag', Law 2005: 837. Full text with amendments up to 2018: 823. Available online: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/vallag-2005837_sfs-2005-837, accessed 20 June 2019. Chapter 5, Art. 2a states that EU citizens must give notice of their desire to be included on the register no later than 30 days before the election. Once registered, they remain on the register for future elections automatically. The number of registered EU voters in the 2014 European Parliament election was 49,902 (out of approximately 248,066 eligible). [Valmyndigheten [Swedish Electoral Authority] (2014), 'Antal unionsmedborgare folkbokförda i Sverige, per län (den 15 april 2014)', https://data.val.se/val/ep2014/statistik/2014_eu-medborgare_per_lan.xls and Valmyndigheten [Swedish Electoral Authority] (2014), 'Val till Europaparlamentet - Ålder och kön', <https://data.val.se/val/ep2014/alkon/E/rike/alderkon.html>, accessed 20 June 2019].
- ⁹⁴ Statistics Sweden (SCB) (2015) *Vilka valde att välja?* p.64.
- ⁹⁵ Statistics Sweden (SCB) (2010), *Valet till Europaparlamentet 2009* (Stockholm: SCB): 121. Available online: https://www.scb.se/contentassets/cfcf9563c6dc4796b5998689bed5529f/me0111_2009a01_br_me07br1001.pdf, accessed 20 June 2019. The figures are based on the sample from the 2009 Labour Force Survey (N=39000) combined with randomly selected samples of over-75 (N=3000), non-Swedish EU registered voters in Sweden (N=2000) and Swedes abroad (N=2000). Total N=46,000. Electoral participation records are then connected to other personal register data to give a detailed dataset that contains many characteristics as well as actual electoral participation. See pp.141-2 for full methodology.
- ⁹⁶ Peltoniemi, J. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Finland* (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS), p.1. Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/60175>, accessed 20 June 2019.
- ⁹⁷ Vallit [Finnish electoral authority] (2019), 'Right to Vote and Compilation of the Voting Register', <https://vaalit.fi/en/right-to-vote-and-Compilation-of-the-voting-register4>, accessed 21 June 2019.
- ⁹⁸ See tables available under vaalit.fi, <https://tulospalvelu.vaalit.fi/KV-2017/en/aanestys1.html>. Data compiled manually from each county's figures.
- ⁹⁹ Peltoniemi, J. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Finland*, p.18.
- ¹⁰⁰ See tables available under vaalit.fi, https://tulospalvelu.vaalit.fi/EPV2014/en/aoik_kokomaa.html, accessed 20 June 2019. Data compiled manually by clicking on each county's figures.

¹⁰¹ Mobile EU citizens could vote in elections to the Gmina (municipal councils) and also for various mayoral offices, with slightly different voter numbers in each. The exact numbers were 1,381 out of 1,845 in the Gmina election and 1,381 out of 1,883 in the executive (WBP) elections. See official electoral statistics at: <https://wybory2018.pkw.gov.pl/xls/2018-frekwencja-i-niewia%C5%BCne-w-obwodach.zip> , accessed 21 June 2019.

¹⁰² Trimikliniotis, N. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Cyprus* (Florence: European University Institute/RSCAS). Available online: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/59408>, accessed 20 June 2019.

¹⁰³ Trimikliniotis, N. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Cyprus*, p.18.

¹⁰⁴ Author's calculations based on figures at ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΕΣ ΕΚΛΟΓΕΣ. 18 ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ, 2016*, [http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/All/96F70AC26CEDA4DDC2257A790024C558/\\$file/%CE%A3%CE%A5%CE%9C%CE%92%CE%9F%CE%A5%CE%9B%CE%9F%CE%99%20%CE%9A%CE%91%CE%99%20%CE%A3%CE%A4%CE%91%CE%A5%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%99%20%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%A4%CE%99%CE%9C%CE%97%CE%A3%CE%97%CE%A3%20-%CE%94%CE%97%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%A4%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%A3%20%CE%95%CE%9A%CE%9B%CE%9F%CE%93%CE%95%CE%A3.docx](http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/moi.nsf/All/96F70AC26CEDA4DDC2257A790024C558/$file/%CE%A3%CE%A5%CE%9C%CE%92%CE%9F%CE%A5%CE%9B%CE%9F%CE%99%20%CE%9A%CE%91%CE%99%20%CE%A3%CE%A4%CE%91%CE%A5%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%99%20%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%A4%CE%99%CE%9C%CE%97%CE%A3%CE%97%CE%A3%20-%CE%94%CE%97%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%A4%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%A3%20%CE%95%CE%9A%CE%9B%CE%9F%CE%93%CE%95%CE%A3.docx), accessed 20 June 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Information provided to FAIR-EU country expert Nicos Trimikliniotis by the Electoral Registrar's office (2018). We are grateful to Nicos Trimikliniotis for allowing us to analyse these data in this report.

¹⁰⁶ Ostling, A. (2019), *FAIREU synthesis report*.

¹⁰⁷ Rainer Bauböck (ed.) (2006) *Migration and Citizenship. Legal Status, Rights and Political Participation*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press).

¹⁰⁸ Trimikliniotis, N. (2018), *Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Cyprus*, p.18.

¹⁰⁹ Since, in principle, the European Parliament is the representative body of all the citizens of the EU and is chosen simultaneously in all countries, it is justifiable on democratic grounds to harmonise the rules for choosing these representatives. Since the politics of national governments (and the parliaments that elect them) do not overlap, the recommendation that such external voting rights be introduced in EP elections does not automatically require states to do the same for their national elections.