

# THINK EUROPEAN VOTE EUROPEAN

## How to vote in Belgium as an EU citizen

With populism and citizen distrust on the rise, the political climate for the European elections is looking particularly challenging for the European Union. Moreover in Belgium, European elections take place at the same time as federal and regional elections. Communicating about what's at stake will therefore prove to be defying as compared to national elections, EU elections are characterised by lower citizen and media interest. Political leaders and candidates will need to show how the EU can make a real difference in citizen' lives and should focus on how Europe can strengthen its reputation as a great place to live, work, study and do business.

As an EU citizen you have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate in European Parliament elections in your country of origin, or if you live in another EU country, you may choose to vote and stand there, under the same conditions as the nationals of that country. All EU countries regulate how these elections are run according to their own laws and voting traditions, provided that they do so in ways that are compatible with the general EU laws and principles. In Belgium this means for example that voting is compulsory once you have registered for this election, but you can deregister at any time after the election. This right also includes some limited exceptions, notably that you may not vote in more than one EU country in the same European elections (which can be a criminal or administrative offence in national law).

Being the capital of Europe we need every citizen residing here to fully participate in the democratic life of the EU. Despite the absence of a strong pan-European party system we are committed to encourage people living in Brussels who are not voting in their home country to register and cast their vote in Belgium, in the city (region) where they live.

Our campaign "Think European Vote European" is aimed at informing the international community in Brussels about their electoral rights by explaining the administrative procedure that is put into place.

You can find all information about the procedure and registration process in the next pages.

**Alain HUTCHINSON**

**Brussels Commissioner for Europe and International Organisations**