

La importancia de los partidos políticos transnacionales para la elección de representantes del pueblo

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We, as Volt, believe in a Europe that ensures the full representation of all citizens and opinions. A Europe where citizens of all States, large and small, have their voices heard and their interests represented. Our vision is therefore that of a Europe where a vibrant democracy creates an open space for debate and allows for all to participate and be recognized and respected in their diversity. **One where citizens directly elect all their European representatives, hold them accountable for their positions, and have their needs included in the decisions we make for us all.** We believe that this new Europe will enable us to be captains of our lives and choices, and to strive for the achievement of our individual ambitions while being part of a stronger community – a community of values.

In our 2019 programme for the European Parliament, we present the great challenge of reforming the European institutions towards a more democratic and participatory system. And that is why in the first section: 1. Fix the EU by creating a strong political Union we already mentioned Enable the creation of real EU political parties. Current EU parties are loose coalitions of national parties, often with conflicting interests; a real EU democracy needs strong parties defending their vision of the future of Europe. **Why?** In order to promote the general interest of all European citizens and strengthen the European political space, we need full-fledged, pan-European political parties, instead of alliances of national parties as we see today. We therefore propose a reform of the Regulations on European political parties, including the possibility for European parties to set up official national branches, with joint financing, as well as the obligation, for the parties benefiting from this financing, to use it under the name of their European party. Campaign material for European elections should be made only under the name of European parties.

How? According to Regulation 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and Council, a “European political party” is an alliance of national political parties and registered with the Authority for European political parties and foundations. We will amend this Regulation, under ordinary legislative procedure, to create a new legal status for European political parties, recognising them as one single entity and allowing joint financing.

Ensure fair representation of all EU citizens and strengthen the link between citizens and their representatives. This can be ensured by implementing the same voting rules for the European Parliament elections across the EU and by having citizens locally elect their Members of the European Parliament, whilst ensuring proportionality.

Why? European Parliamentary elections are the one occasion when all Europeans vote together for a common Parliament. Yet, the way we elect our parliamentary representatives differs widely between Member States. However, the European Parliament is mandated to propose a uniform voting mechanism for adoption by the Council. The European Parliament should therefore propose measures to harmonise voting systems across the EU, including voting age, election date, applicable thresholds, campaign rules, and voting mechanisms. Mindful of the importance of promoting gender equality in political representation, we also propose that all party lists for list-based elections be gender-alternate in their ranking of candidates, meaning the list would not have two consecutive candidates of the same gender. For

the voting mechanism, we support a dual vote whereby local constituencies each directly elect a single representative and a second "party" vote with national lists ensures a degree of proportionality. These EU electoral districts should, as much as possible, follow existing administrative borders.

How? According to Article 223.1 TFEU, the European Parliament can propose "the election of its members by direct universal suffrage" through "a uniform procedure in all Member States" for adoption by the European Council. Failing to agree on a uniform procedure, the European Council has settled for "common principles", and elections must be based on proportional representation, either through lists or "single transferable vote". We will submit a proposal for uniform voting rules across the EU, in line with the principles stated above, for adoption by the Parliament, and Council.

It was Volt Europa's goal from the start to qualify to become a European Party as outlined under the [regulation governing Europarties in Regulation \(EC\) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament](#). For this to happen, we must have Elected Officials at the European or national level in 7 different EU countries.

We want to build our Volt EP faction. One Goal we can only influence every 5 years, while the other is an in-between goal that we can aim for between the 5-year-cycle of EP elections. Plus, we also believe we will reach the European party status before we can build our own EP faction.

At the moment, we have 2: Germany (Damian, our MEP) and the Netherlands (our two MPs). We recently lost Bulgaria as a third country, but we are confident we can go back to 3 once Nastimir and our other members get elected.

However, there is an exception to this rule, where in 7 countries of Europe (the ones you represent), some regional parliaments also count towards this goal. This is partly because these are regional states within their national federations, and others because they are semi-autonomous. [You can see the states/regions where this would count here](#).

And this is a parallel direction to our electoral strategy, and we will continue until we are recognized as the first truly European party with our own parliamentary group in the European Parliament.

As a result of the 2019 European Parliament (EP) elections, fresh talks and discussions about the reform of the current legal and political framework of the EP elections are ongoing in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) of the European Parliament. Last May our proposal for transnational lists was approved in the European Parliament.

Our Discussion on transnational lists in particular:

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- First step towards European Parties. Transnational lists could be a first step towards real European Parties that raises awareness and brings the need to do real European politics with a common European programme instead of focusing on national topics in the election campaign
- Increasing of European debate. Transnational lists could be a measure to enable more transnational European debate, which might lead to or at least promote the creation of a European political/public sphere
- Voting for truly European representatives. Transnational lists would ensure a mixed system in which the national rules based on uniform principles would co-

exist with a purely European electoral system based on the idea that MEPs represent citizens and parties, not States or peoples, thus the essence of a supranational democracy.

- Voting for politicians from other Member States. Transnational lists can give the possibility to vote for politicians from other Member States.
- A Union-wide list would strengthen the personalisation and Europeanisation of the elections to the European Parliament, making implicit that the leading candidate of the transnational lists would take the role of candidate of the respective party for the post of President of the Commission.
- The transnational lists would reduce the powers of national governments regarding the nomination of the President of the Commission, thus, granting more political power transferred from national political parties to European parties.

European Parliament elections tend to have a much lower turnout than any national election. In Slovakia, only 22.47% of the population went to the polls in the last European elections in 2019, while in the national elections, one year later, more than 65% voted. In Spain, on the other hand, the situation was quite different. The turnout was 61% of the population, above the European average, and almost equal to the turnout in the general elections (69.88%). The explanation is simple: the elections were held on the same day, which facilitated participation in the European elections. However, it also meant that the most voted parties were the same as in the general elections, i.e. PSOE and PP, both of which only ran an election campaign with a national programme, but not a European one.

The European parties that make up the European Parliament today cannot campaign as a party; it is the national parties that make up the European Parliament that run their own campaigns. This means that a Spanish citizen cannot vote for a Portuguese candidate, and a Dutch citizen does not know the programme of a Croatian candidate. However, members of the European Parliament represent the entire European population, regardless of the territory in which they are elected. This deepens the inherent disconnect between the citizen and the elected representative, and even more so between the citizen and the institutions.

The European Parliament has voted on a reform of European electoral law that will change, among other things, precisely this. By introducing transnational lists and a harmonisation of electoral rules at national level, major changes will take place: greater identification of the electorate with the European Parliament, more direct democracy, greater participation in politics, especially among the youngest, and greater integration between the Member States.

EU policy must be bold and open the door for new ideas to enter the European political debate and change the decision-making process, making our democracy more innovative, fairer and more representative. The introduction of transnational lists is a first step, and a very necessary one, towards the creation of a European political and civil space, and constitutes a first response to citizens' demands. At the plenary session of the Conference for the Future of Europe in early May, the 49 proposals made by all those who took part, over several months, in this first citizens' participation exercise were presented. One of the proposals that came out on top was the reform of European electoral law, with one of the most popular measures being the introduction of transnational lists.

Transnational lists will provide the basis for a true European democracy, a democracy that needs transnational political and civil actors, backed by renewed democratic legitimacy. In practice, they will have a double positive effect, as they will contribute

to the Europeanisation of both political parties and public debate. The new electoral law will mobilise citizens around visions, projects and programmes that necessarily include a pan-European perspective, thus laying the foundations for a more participatory European democratic space. A new transnational dimension of European politics will reinforce the legitimacy of a European Union with more competences, allowing for significant advances in the political, economic and cultural integration of the EU, especially in traditionally sensitive areas such as security, defence or human rights.

In addition to the many implications of the introduction of transnational lists, the new electoral law also includes a harmonisation of the electoral rules of the different member states. Until now, European elections have been conducted by each country according to criteria that differ from one country to another. In 2019, only citizens from 13 of the 27 member states were able to vote by post, while in 2024 this will be possible in all of them. This measure will encourage participation, as it also provides for different ways of voting, such as early physical voting, proxy voting and e-voting.

The draft also states that every EU citizen will have the right to vote from the age of 16, but "without prejudice to existing constitutional provisions". Although this is a step in the right direction to allow greater participation of Europe's youth, this derogation will not change much in practice, as it will remain up to the Member States to lower the legal voting age. It will, however, be mandatory to lower the age at which a citizen can stand as a candidate in elections. In Italy, for example, it is necessary to be 25 years old to stand as a candidate, while in Spain it is enough to be 18. This will change in 2024. Finally, the elections will be held on a single day in all countries, for which 9 May, Europe Day, has been designated.

The agreement reached by the European Parliament represents a historic moment for the Union. Electoral legislation has not changed for more than 40 years, during which time more than 220 million European voters have joined the electorate. However, for this electoral reform to become a reality in 2024, it needs to be approved by all Member States. The will of national governments will be fundamental to further advance the integration of the European Union, achieving a European Parliament that is truly representative of all citizens. In addition to being a success, this law is also a necessary condition for a broader and more organic reform, in a federal key, of the European Union.