

# Press release – Final turnout data for 2019 European elections announced



On 18 October 2019, the UK electoral commission [published](#) the definitive numbers of registered voters and voters in the United Kingdom for the European Elections 2019. With this publication all 28 EU Member States have officially announced their final national turnout data, settling the official final turnout at European level at 50.66% (+8.06 pp compared to 2014).

The 2019 European elections were shaped by the significant increase in voter turnout. 50.66% is in fact the highest turnout since 1994 European elections and a striking increase by 8.06 percentage points from 2014 (when the turnout was 42.60%).

19 Member States reported increase in national turnout, with significant increases compared to 2014 recorded in Poland, Romania, Spain, Austria, Hungary and Germany. Also countries with a traditional low or very low turnout in European elections, such as Slovakia and Czechia, showed substantial increases. On the other hand, turnout decreased in eight countries, but by no more than 3 percentage points in any of them. Despite the average increase in turnout, large differences remain between Member States, ranging from 88.47% in Belgium to 22.74% in Slovakia.

You can find all final data on the [results website](#).

## **Youth participation**

Socio-demographic analysis shows that there has been an increase in turnout for all groups of the population, although this is higher for some groups, with a much larger turnout among younger people and first-time voters. Although older people remain more likely to vote, the increase between 2014 and 2019 is larger among young people aged under 25 (42%, +14 pp) and aged 25–39 (47%, +12pp), when compared with those aged 55 or over (54%, +3 pp).

Overall, this means that the differences between age groups have narrowed when comparing 2019 with 2014 (see page 24 [of the report](#)).

### **Reasons for voting**

A greater sense of civic duty boosted the overall turnout, alongside increasingly positive support for the EU and its impact on Europeans.

The most common reason for voting was because people felt it was their duty as a citizen (52%). Other main reasons were because the respondent always votes (35%), because they are in favour of the EU (25%), to support the political party they feel close to (22%) and because voting in the elections can 'make things change' (18%) (see page 44 [of the report](#)).

### **Issues behind the vote**

There are five issues mentioned by at least a third of respondents as reasons to go to vote: economy and growth (44%), combating climate change and protecting the environment (37%), promoting human rights and democracy (37%), the way the EU should be working in the future (36%) and immigration (34%).

At least a quarter of respondents mentioned a number of other issues: social protection of EU citizens (29%), the fight against terrorism (26%), combatting youth unemployment (25%) and security and defence policy (25%). Also mentioned are the protection of external borders (21%), consumer protection and food safety (20%) and protection of personal data (12%) (see page 50 [of the report](#)).

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**[EIB Group and Banco Santander provide EUR 1.9bn to finance Spanish SMEs and mid-caps](#)**



- **EUR 900m will go to SMEs finding it hardest to access finance, such as micro-enterprises and entrepreneurs**
- **The agreements will make it possible to provide EUR 1bn to business owners that need to renew their vehicles**
- **Employment impact: the operation will help maintain almost 400 000 jobs**
- **Some of these funds will be granted with Investment Plan for Europe support**

The European Investment Bank Group, composed of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF), and Banco Santander are set to provide EUR 1.9bn to Spanish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps via agreements signed in Madrid by EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro, Banco Santander CEO José Antonio Álvarez and Senior Executive Vice President of Banco Santander and Head of Santander Consumer Finance (SCF) Magda Salarich. The goal of both institutions is to join forces to support Spanish companies by offering them financing with favourable conditions, in terms of both interest rates and maturity periods, to foster economic growth and employment.

### **Support for the most vulnerable SMEs**

The EIB and Santander will provide EUR 900m to SMEs and mid-caps via a risk-sharing operation – an innovative agreement making it possible to share risks

between the two organisations. In concrete terms, the EIB will invest EUR 450m in a portfolio of loans granted to companies by Banco Santander. This support will enable Banco Santander to expand its financing capacity and make EUR 900m available to SMEs. Some of these funds will go to three particularly vulnerable types of SMEs: the self-employed, micro-enterprises with under ten employees, and small businesses operating in regions with high unemployment. This agreement will help support almost 7 000 SMEs employing around 160 000 people.

This is the third risk-sharing operation signed by the EIB and Banco Santander and was made possible by the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), the support of which enables the EU bank to finance riskier projects.

### **EUR 1bn to renew companies' transport fleets**

The EIB Group also signed an agreement with Santander Consumer Finance making it possible to provide EUR 1bn to help Spanish SMEs and mid-caps to renew their transport fleets with more efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles, including via leasing. These funds will help to secure 250 000 jobs.

The agreement was implemented via EIB and EIF investment in a Santander Consumer Finance consumer loan securitisation fund. The EIB has purchased EUR 227m of bonds issued by the fund and the EIF has guaranteed an additional EUR 270m. This innovative financial instrument is state-of-the-art from a regulatory standpoint and will enable Santander Consumer Finance to free up capital from its loan portfolio to grant EUR 1bn in new financing.

At the signing ceremony, **EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro** highlighted *"the impact of these agreements on creating and securing jobs in Spain. We are particularly pleased to be able to support companies whose size or business area mean that they find it more difficult to implement their investments, and to help those needing to replace their transport fleets with less polluting alternatives to benefit from the advantages of EIB financing. Ensuring these companies have access to the resources they need to grow and become more competitive is one of the EIB Group's main goals. To this end, in recent years we have dedicated over 50% of our total financing in Spain to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises."*

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## **[The Observatory launches two major studies on how SMEs and young Europeans perceive IP](#)**

October 29, 2019 [About the EUIPO](#)

The Observatory launches two major studies on how SMEs and young Europeans perceive IP



The European Observatory on Infringements of IP Rights has launched two EU-wide studies on the perceptions of IP among European citizens.

The goal of [the 2019 IP SME Scoreboard](#) is to gain a better understanding of how EU SMEs perceive and use IPRs. It will provide decision makers with an up-to-date and relevant evidence base from which to design policies to improve awareness and use of IPRs.

The [2019 IP Youth Scoreboard](#) aims to shed light on the strongest drivers and barriers for youths when acquiring online digital content or purchasing physical goods that are offered both legally and illegally.

Today's studies are the second editions of the IP SME Scoreboard and Youth Scoreboard series, which were first released by the EUIPO in 2016. The former surveys micro-, small- and medium-sized SMEs in all 28 EU Member States across a range of economic activities and sectors, while the latter shows the latest trends in the use of legal and illegal online sources among European youths and their perceptions and behaviours towards counterfeit goods.

Both reports were launched at the Observatory public sector representatives meeting and at the SME conference in Helsinki, Finland (29-30 October 2019).

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[\*\*Rise in environmental crime addressed\*\*](#)

# at ENPE and Eurojust conference

The Hague, 29 October 2019

**International criminal networks are rapidly expanding their activities into the realm of environmental crime. With a threefold rise in major cases being opened at Eurojust last year, more co-ordination is necessary to combat this form of cross-border crime and ensure that health and safety standards and a high level of environmental protection are maintained. Tackling international environmental crime, as well the protection of endangered species and the natural habitat, such as preventing the dumping of hazardous materials, are of vital importance. Furthermore, organised crime undermines legally operating enterprises in the field of waste management.**

**How to win the fight against organised environmental crime is the main topic of the forthcoming joint conference, International collaboration & co-operation in the fight against environmental crime, organised by the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment (ENPE) and Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit, starting today at Eurojust's premises in The Hague.**

The conference will consist of two days of plenary and breakout sessions, featuring presentations from four continents, including from specialists from Brazil, China and North and South America, as well as a dedicated workshop focusing on how best to co-operate globally in tackling environmental crime. More than 100 specialists from all over the world will attend the event.

Ahead of the conference, Eurojust's President, Mr Ladislav Hamran, said: *'Combatting environmental crime is of great importance, because it poses a serious threat to our health and physical safety. That's why Eurojust gladly joins forces with ENPE, and other actors concerned, in an effort to stop organised crime from getting a foothold in this sector.'*

ENPE's President, Ms Anne Brosnan, said: *'ENPE is a growing network of European prosecutors, sharing learning and best practice, establishing good case law and developing training opportunities in relation to the prosecution of environmental crime across Europe. Working with Eurojust and other partners, we will help to deliver better environmental regulation and a healthier, more sustainable environment. Our annual conference this year, held in conjunction with Eurojust, will provide a unique opportunity to embed, improve and expand this work.'*



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Tackling cross-border organised environmental crime is a priority for the European Union. The conference will focus on concrete steps to improve the fight against environmental offences, including serious and organised crime, by improving international collaboration and co-operation in relation to the

prosecution of environmental criminals. Judicial practitioners and specialists in the field will exchange best practice and discuss mutual approaches to promote effectiveness in prosecution and to strengthen and speed up investigations in general.

The conference will be opened by Eurojust's Vice-President, Mr Klaus Meyer-Cabri, and chaired by Ms Brosnan. The Dutch Secretary of State for the Environment, Ms Stientje van Veldhoven, will address the conference via video link. Speakers from, amongst other bodies, INTERPOL, the European Commission and the European Union Forum of Environmental Judges network (EUFJE), will share their knowledge and experience. The conference will end on Wednesday 30 October.

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## [Illegal tobacco trade halted after international operation](#)

### **Joint Eurojust – Europol – OLAF press release**

The Hague, 28 October 2019

Authorities from seven countries, with the active support of Eurojust, Europol and the European anti-fraud office OLAF, have dismantled an international organised crime group (OCG) which was involved in the large scale illegal trade of tobacco. During an action day, coordinated at Eurojust, 18 persons from different nationalities have been arrested, who are suspected of money laundering and the illegal trade and storage of around 670.000 kilos of tobacco. Three suspects from Italy will be heard. The illegal trade has led to a loss of customs and excise duties for the Dutch fiscal authorities of approximately 70 million Euro. A total of 29 searches have taken place in Italy, Poland, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, mainly in the south eastern province of Limburg. Authorities from Romania and Cyprus have contributed actively to the operation.



Photo © FIOD

The criminal organisation allegedly bought tobacco in Italy, which was then processed and sold to traders for the use in illegal cigarette factories. The criminals played a role as well in the brokerage of illegally produced cigarettes and bought, sold and repaired machinery for cigarette production. As a result of international cooperation, since last year already illegal cigarette factories have been dismantled in Poland, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, whose operators had close links to the criminals who have now been arrested.

Eurojust held a coordination meeting and set up a coordination centre during

the action day and provided assistance with the issuing of European Investigation Orders (EIOs) and European Arrest Warrants (EAWs).

The operation was based on an analysis of a special operational taskforce set up in February 2018 between Europol, the UK's HM Revenue & Customs (HRMC) and Dutch fiscal police FIOD and on an investigation conducted by OLAF in other EU Member States where the same criminal organisation was involved . The operation was one of the first cases which forms a vital part of the ongoing intelligence picture. Regular meetings at Europol between the taskforce members helped identify numerous High Value Targets against which actions were taken in the framework of this operation.

Over 250 officers of police, fiscal police and customs have been deployed during the action day in the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, Poland and Belgium.