

European Commission press release on the right of EU citizens to stand as candidates (20 December 2012)

Caption: On 20 December 2012, the Council of the European Union adopts a Commission proposal to simplify the procedure for EU citizens living in another Member State to stand as candidates in the forthcoming European Parliament elections. This measure is one of the initiatives taken by the Commission to encourage and facilitate participation in the European Parliament elections.

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION****MEMO**

Brussels, 20 December 2012

Citizens will be able to stand as candidates in another EU country more easily under new EU rules

Today, the EU Council of Ministers has adopted a European Commission proposal to make it easier for EU citizens living in another Member State to stand as candidates in the 2014 European Parliament elections. This follows an overwhelming vote by the European Parliament in favour of the proposal (618 votes in favour, 23 votes against and 14 abstentions) on 20 November ([IP/12/1232](#)). The new law will simplify the procedure (currently regulated by [Directive 93/109/EC](#)) for EU citizens to stand as candidates for the European Parliament in another EU Member State. It is one the Commission's initiatives to promote and facilitate participation in the European elections.

"We need citizens to have a strong say in building a stronger political Union and taking part in the European elections is the most important way for citizens to make their voice heard in the EU," said Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. *"Any EU citizen has the right to vote or stand for election to the Parliament in the EU country in which they live. Our new rules will make it easier for citizens to make use of these rights. I'd like to thank both the Parliament and Council for helping to ensure that the new rules can enter in force in time before the European Parliament elections in 2014."*

This initiative will be complemented by the work of the European institutions during the 2013 European Year of Citizens, which will help better inform citizens about their rights and prepare the ground for the next European elections in 2014.

Background

Thanks to EU citizenship – which complements, but does not replace national citizenship – all nationals of the 27 EU Member States have a set of additional rights as EU citizens. These include the right to vote and stand in local and European elections in the EU country they live in.

The European Commission is working to facilitate the use these rights. Already in 2006 it proposed changes to [Directive 93/109/EC](#) which sets out arrangements to enable EU citizens to make use of their right to vote or stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament in the EU Member State they live in.

The Commission's proposal would simplify the procedure for those candidates standing in another Member State than their own and would reform the mechanism to prevent double voting in European elections. Because Member States were unable to agree unanimously on the arrangements concerning double voting, negotiations on the proposal had been suspended in 2008.

On the initiative of the Commission, discussions were re-launched in October 2011 focusing on the main aspect of the proposal: simplification of the procedures for non-national EU citizens to stand as candidates. Namely, candidates would no longer be obliged to return to their home Member State to obtain a certificate stating that they are not deprived of their right to stand as a candidate. Instead, when applying to stand as a candidate in their Member State of residence they would only be required to provide a declaration in that sense and the burden of the proof would be on the Member State of residence's electoral authority.

For more information

European Commission – EU citizenship

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen>

Homepage of Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner:

<http://ec.europa.eu/reding>