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Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT) Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies in collaboration with Edinburgh University Law School

Codebook for Dataset of Turnout Rates for Mobile EU citizens in European Parliament and Municipal Elections 2009-2018, v.1.1

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GLOBALCIT studies political participation in the context of the project Fostering Awareness, Inclusion and Recognition of EU mobile citizens' Political Rights (FAIR EU).

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# Codebook for Dataset of Turnout Rates for Mobile EU citizens in European Parliament and Municipal Elections 2009-2018, v.1.1

# Derek Hutcheson and Luana Russo

# 1. Methodology

In order to assess the participation of mobile European Union (EU) citizens in municipal and European Parliament (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,** to which EU Directive 93/108/EC applied (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 the data collection was completed under the FAIREU project.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the European Commission's own reports on participation rates focus on self-reported questionnaire returns from national authorities,<sup>2</sup> the database constructed for the FAIREU project used is based mainly on **publicly-available official sources** of electoral information, supplemented with other reliable and verifiable data.

The comparative **geographical scope** of database encompasses the 28 Member States of the EU. Croatia joined the EU in 2013 and is included only from that point. The UK remained a Member State until its *de jure* exit on 31 January 2020, and was thus an EU Member State for the period covered by the database. This counts UK citizens among the mobile EU citizens in other EU countries, and EU citizens resident in the UK as mobile EU citizens. To retrospectively separate out the UK's citizens from those of the other 27 Member States – when they were not differentiated at the time – is a task that is beyond the scope of the database.

A 'mobile EU citizen' is considered to be a person holding the citizenship of an EU country but resident in a different Member State to that of their citizenship. Mobile EU citizens holding multiple nationalities that include their country of residence will usually be counted in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 'Fostering Awareness, Inclusion and Recognition of EU Mobile Citizens' Political Rights' (FAIR EU, 1 January 2018-30 June 2019). This research was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The content of this report represents the views of the authors only and is their sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 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: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/final report 2014">https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/final report 2014</a> ep elections study cses 10 march 2015 en.pdf, accessed 26 April 2021); European Commission (2018), 'Report on the Application of Directive 94/80/EC', COM(2018)44 final.

that country's statistics as a national citizen, regardless of their other citizenships. Conversely, even the possession of multiple nationalities does not negate a citizen's claim to external voting rights in the country of their original citizenship, where these exist (though the right may be restricted by the state of origin, e.g., due to residence requirements, or by the requirement to vote only in one country in EP elections).

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;<sup>3</sup>
- 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);<sup>4</sup>
- 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.<sup>5</sup>

# 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 rights/participation, 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)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 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: <a href="https://samf.ku.dk/nyheder/ny-analyse-vi-er-paa-vej-mod-et-demokratisk-a-og-b-hold/KV RV17 valgdeltagelse.pdf">https://samf.ku.dk/nyheder/ny-analyse-vi-er-paa-vej-mod-et-demokratisk-a-og-b-hold/KV RV17 valgdeltagelse.pdf</a>, accessed 26 April 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 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: <a href="https://www.mrrb.bg/bg/vuv-vruzka-s-priklyuchiliya-etap-ot-dejnostite-na-mrrb-gd-grao-svurzani-s-podgotovkata-i-provejdaneto-na-izborite-v-stranata-na-23-10-2011-g-vi-uvedomyavame-slednoto/, accessed 26</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See <a href="https://faireu.ecas.org/reports/">https://faireu.ecas.org/reports/</a>. Also available via the European University Institute's CADMUS catalogue

## • 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; and for selected nationalities, Spain, Portugal and – prior to its EU departure – the UK) give voting rights to third-country citizens (TCCs) as well as EU citizens in municipal elections. There are, however, typically much longer waiting periods for TCCs than for mobile EU citizens, and in some cases 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:

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

#### • Turnout

- o Absolute number of mobile EU citizens actually voting.
- o Proportion of EU voters relative to the number of registered mobile EU citizens (turnout as % of registered EU voters).
- o 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).

Not all countries had equally comprehensive data, and in some cases it was not possible to ascertain with accuracy the registration or turnout rates (see section 3).

'Turnout' is not defined identically in each country's electoral legislation. For the purposes of methodological 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. Data collection was as comprehensive as possible but in some cases, not all lines of the database could be filled in from primary data, and are estimated as closely as possible from the available sources (e.g. the absolute number of voters casting votes can be calculated from

the number of voters on the electoral roll and the percentage turnout, but there may be a small margin of error due to rounding).

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

ISO/EU country	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 <sup>nd</sup> 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
			counties in England;
			counties, county boroughs and communities in Wales;
			regions and Islands in Scotland;
UK	United Kingdom	Various	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. 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 usually 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 (e.g., final official paper-based/scanned certified summary documents with signatures and stamps, and official online detailed databases of electoral commissions) contain slightly different information. This means that a value judgement sometimes has to be taken as to which of two different 'official' figures is the more accurate. 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 one, or the latter is more legally definitive.

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.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 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: <a href="https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf\_file/Electoral-registration-report-July-2017.pdf">https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf\_file/Electoral-registration-report-July-2017.pdf</a>, accessed 26 April 2021]. Moreover, there are wildly differing estimates of how many UK citizens live overseas, and how many of them would qualify to vote (enfranchisement is limited to those who have resided in the UK

• 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. 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.
- O 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.<sup>8</sup>
- O 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. Categories/codes used in the database

## 4.1 Turnout data

Where data are available, they are included in the database in the relevant cell. The sources used are as follows:

1) Individual country sources are as indicated in the comments box for each cell. For brevity, these take the form of either a unique copiable weblink without further detailed information, or a reference to a FAIREU publication/page number (see point 3). Where no unique source is given, the information was obtained from EP Review (2014) or CSES (2015) for EP elections, or COM(2018)44 final for municipal elections.<sup>9</sup>

over the previous 15 years, though the Conservative government quietly announced a plan in its March 2021 budget to change this).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> 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', <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/eucitizensregisteredtovot">https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/eucitizensregisteredtovot</a> e, accessed 26 April 2021].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> EP review (2014): Directorate-General for Communication: Public Opinion Monitoring Unit (2014), Review: Les élections européennes et nationales en chiffres (Brussels: European Parliament). Available online: <a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/elections results/review.pdf">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/elections results/review.pdf</a>, accessed 26 April 2021; Centre for Strategy and

- 2) In most cases, percentage calculations are based on the numbers (N) obtained from primary electoral data. In a few cases (indicated), the officially-published data was a percentage figure rather than an absolute number, in which case the number of voters (N) is an estimate back-calculated from this and may have a small margin of error owing to rounding.
- 3) When a source is listed as 'FAIR-EU country report', it refers to the political participation report for the relevant country available at <a href="https://faireu.ecas.org/">https://faireu.ecas.org/</a>.
- 4) Municipal elections shown are the most recent ones prior to 2019 for each country

The categories used, and the ranges and parameters of them, are as follows. If data are not available, they are recorded in the database with the label 'ND' (no data).

# **Municipal elections**

Label	Indicator and range	Additional explanation (if required)
Code	2-letter country code	ISO 2-letter country codes, as modified by EU (listed in table 1 of this document)
Countries	Country name	
Estimated non- national EU population of voting age (Eurostat unless otherwise indicated)	Number of resident non-national EU citizens aged 18 and over.	Estimated from Eurostat or other national data. Includes all of voting age, without reference to other criteria (e.g., residence requirements)
% non-national EU citizens of population >18	Proportion of population aged over 18 who are non-national EU citizens	Based on Eurostat population statistics (not shown)
Registered non- national EU voters	Number (N)	Number of non-national EU citizens registered to vote
Registered as % of eligible	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of non-national EU voting age voters registered to vote.
Non-national EU turnout	Number (N)	Number of non-national EU citizens taking part in voting (if available)
Turnout as % of non-national EU registered	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of registered non-national EU voters who voted
Turnout as % of non-national EU eligible	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of all non-national EU voters over 18 (both registered and unregistered) who voted
Election date	Date (2014-18)	Date of polling day
Institution elected	Name of local government units	
Notes	_	Any other relevant information

Evaluation Services/European Commission (2015), Study on the Conduct of the 2014 Elections to the European pp.72-73. Parliament (Brussels: European Commission). Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/final report 2014 ep elections study cses 10 march 2015 en.pdf, accessed 26 April 2021); 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, Available online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-January 2018. content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0044&from=en, accessed 26 April 2021.

# **European Parliament elections**

Label	Indicator and range	Additional explanation (if required)
Code	2-letter country code	ISO 2-letter country codes, as modified by EU (listed in table 1 of this document)
Countries	Country name	
Year	Year of election (2009 or 2014, except HR)	
Estimated non- national EU population of voting age (Eurostat unless otherwise indicated)	Number of resident non-national EU citizens aged 18 and over.	Estimated from Eurostat or other national data. Includes all of voting age, without reference to other criteria (e.g., residence requirements)
Registered non- national EU voters	Number (N)	Number of non-national EU citizens registered to vote
Registered as % of eligible	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of mobile EU voting age voters registered to vote
Registered external voters (national citizens)	Number (N)	Number of non-resident national citizens registered to vote outside the country
Total voters (incl. external and non-national EU)	Number (N)	Total electorate including citizen residents, non-national EU citizens and external voters
Turnout, non- national EU voters	Number (N)	Number of mobile non-national EU citizens taking part in voting (if available)
Turnout, external voters (national citizens)	Number (N)	Number of non-resident citizens taking part in voting (if available)
Turnout total (incl. external and non-national EU)	Number (N)	Total turnout including mobile EU citizens and external voters
Overall turnout as % of registered electorate	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of all voters (including non-national EU & external) who voted
Non-national EU voter turnout as % of registered	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of registered non-national EU voters who voted
Non-national EU voter turnout as % of voting-age EU residents	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of all resident non-national EU voters over 18 (both registered and unregistered) who voted
External voter (national citizens) turnout as % of registered	Percentage (0-100%)	Proportion of non-national non-resident citizens who voted
Notes		Any other relevant information

# 4.2 Electoral commissions

In addition to the electoral turnout data, a separate tab in the database gives a set of useful links to the central electoral authorities; the main official portals to election results in each country; and an explanatory text about the structure of local government.

# The categories listed are:

Label	Indicator and range	Additional explanation (if required)
Code	2-letter country code	ISO 2-letter country codes, as modified by EU (listed in table 1 of this document)
Countries	Country name	
Central Electoral Commission website	Hyperlink	Link to main national electoral authority
Organisation	Name of electoral commission	Name in original language and English translation
Past election results - Portal	Hyperlink	Link to official sources of election results
Local government structures (description)	Hyperlink	Useful link to OECD/European Committee of the Regions documentation on local government structure in each country.





