

'Electoral law' from Le Monde. Dossiers et documents (June 1979)

Caption: In June 1979, in its coverage of the outcome of the election of the European Parliament (EP) by direct universal suffrage, the french periodical Le Monde. Dossiers et documents focuses on the voting procedures of the various Member States.

Source: Le Monde. Dossiers et documents: Les premières élections européennes (Juin 1979). La campagne et les résultats. Les institutions et le bilan de la C.E.E.. dir. de publ. Decornoy, Jacques. Juin 1979. Paris: Le Monde. "Les lois électorales", p. 9.

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/electoral_law_from_le_monde_dossiers_et_documents_june_1979-en-co7cdb36-a980-464f-9180-9c40df850b8e.html



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Electoral law

FRANCE

The French electoral law was adopted by the National Assembly on 21 June 1977 by 474 votes to 2 (namely Mr Guillermin and Mr Rivière, RPR Members of Parliament for Rhône and Loire respectively) and by the Senate on 29 June 1977 unopposed with the abstention of the 20 Communist Senators.

The 1979 election in France was held under the system of proportional representation (as in all the other Member States except the United Kingdom). Voting for candidates standing for different parties and preferential voting were not permitted. Seats were allocated in the order in which the candidates were presented on each list. Lists that had failed to secure at least 5 % of the votes cast were excluded from the allocation of seats (Article 3). The territory of the French Republic formed a single electoral district (Article 4). Each elector voted for a list of 81 names. Seats falling vacant during the parliamentary term would be allocated to the first name on the list of unelected candidates.

An authorised representative had to provide a deposit of 100 000 francs for each list. The deposit was refunded only if the list secured at least 5 % of the votes cast.

The French electoral code was applicable, and French citizens abroad were able to vote under the same conditions as for presidential elections.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The parties were allowed to choose whether to submit a national list as in France or lists broken down into Länder. Voting for candidates standing for different parties and preferential voting were not permitted. Only those lists that secured at least 5 % of votes cast were counted. Only parties and equivalent organisations could put candidates forward. Germans abroad could vote only if they lived within the European Community. Seats falling vacant during the parliamentary term were to be taken over by substitutes.

The Federal Republic of Germany proper elected only 78 Members, with a further three being set aside for West Berlin. In order to avoid complaints from the Soviets and East Germans about the occupied status of the former capital, the three 'European' Members were elected by the Chamber of Deputies of West Berlin rather than by direct universal suffrage.

BELGIUM

Belgium was divided into two electoral colleges: a Flemish one of 13 seats and a Walloon one of 11 seats, and into three electoral districts — Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia. Electors in Brussels could choose which electoral college to vote for. Preferential voting was allowed but not voting for candidates standing for different parties. Seats falling vacant during the parliamentary term were to be taken over by substitutes. Belgians abroad were permitted to vote if they had a residence in Belgium.

DENMARK

Denmark consisted of a single electoral district of 15 seats, plus a sixteenth for Greenland. Preferential voting was allowed but not voting for candidates standing for different parties. Danes abroad could vote only if they lived in the European Community.

UNITED KINGDOM

Only electors in Great Britain proper voted under the first-past-the-post system; those in Ulster (Northern Ireland) elected their three Members by proportional representation. The other 78 seats were divided among England (66), Scotland (8) and Wales (4). Citizens of the Republic of Ireland (Eire) had equal voting rights with British citizens.

Britons abroad were allowed to vote only if they were civil servants or military personnel.

IRELAND

Ireland was divided into four electoral districts. In addition to complete lists, individual candidates were allowed to stand. They were required to pay a deposit. Preferential voting and voting for candidates standing for different parties were permitted under a particularly complicated system that, according to experts, was otherwise only to be found on the Australian island of Tasmania: when candidates received more votes than required for their election, the excess votes could be transferred to other candidates designated by electors on their voting slips. Seats falling vacant during the parliamentary term were to be assigned in accordance with a decision taken by the Parliament in Dublin.

Irish citizens abroad were not allowed to vote (other than by participating in the British ballot, if they lived abroad), but European Community citizens living in Ireland were entitled to participate.

LUXEMBOURG

The Grand Duchy consisted of one electoral district. Preferential voting and voting for candidates standing for different parties were permitted.

NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands consisted of one national electoral district. Candidates were required to belong to a political party or equivalent organisation and pay a deposit. Preferential voting was permitted but not voting for candidates standing for different parties. Dutch citizens living in other European Community States were allowed to vote, as were nationals of other European Community States residing in the Netherlands who were unable to vote in their country of origin.

ITALY

Italy was divided into five electoral districts. Preferential voting was permitted but not voting for candidates standing for different parties. Italians living in other European Community States were allowed to vote in their country's consulates.