

## ★ EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2009

The next European elections will be held in June 2009. They are important for every European citizen. We will elect people who will speak for us at European level. These are the people who got the most votes.

*These people who speak for their country are called "Members of the European Parliament" (MEP).*

## ★ What is the European Parliament?

The European Parliament takes part in making laws for all the countries in the European Union about:

- *Equal rights and non-discrimination (treating everyone fairly)*
- *Education and training*
- *Going to work in another country*
- *Agriculture (another word for farming)*
- *Culture (ideas and customs of a society)*
- *Health Protection (protection is another word for looking after something)*
- *The protection of consumers (any person who buys goods and services)*
- *Research = collecting information and finding out new facts*

Each country in the European Union is represented in the European Parliament.

A person who speaks up for a country is called a Member of the European Parliament.

The European Parliament decides how the money of the European Union is spent.

This leaflet was prepared by Inclusion Europe and adapted by the "My opinion my vote" project.



<http://www.myopinionmyvote.eu/>

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# YOUR VOTE COUNTS

**All citizens aged 18 years and older have the right to vote...  
...regardless of their disability**

In Ireland we will vote for the local and European Parliament elections on the 5th of June 2009

★ **HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**



If you need to know more:  
Go to [www.myopinionmyvote.eu](http://www.myopinionmyvote.eu) where you will find easy-to-read information about the European political groups



## ★ The European Elections

Every 5 years there is a European election. In Ireland the next European election will be on the 5th of June.

You can vote for the Members of Parliament of your country. Members of Parliament are called MEPs for short.

A person who wants to become an MEP is called a candidate. Find out which candidate supports people with learning disabilities. Tell candidates if you want anything about the European laws to change.

Remember that MEPs only deal with issues that affect everyone in the European Union.

## ★ How to vote?

Show the people at the polling station your polling card. You must also bring some photo identification such as your passport. The people at the desk will give you a page with a list of people you can vote for.

This page is called a ballot paper.

You bring the ballot paper with you into the polling booth.

The people at the desk will tell you where to go. You use numbers to vote in a European Election.

You write number 1 next to your first choice, number 2 next to your second choice and so on. Fold the ballot paper and put it into the ballot box.

**Remember that your vote is secret.**

**Nobody can tell you who to vote for.**

## ★ After the European elections

When the polling station closes at 10pm, all the votes are counted.

This is called the count. The candidate who has the most number of votes wins the election.

You can watch the count on television.

You can find out the winners from the television or the newspapers. Do not forget your MEP after the elections.

The MEP who has won the election can speak for you at European level even if you did not vote for this MEP.

## ★ What is an election?

The time when you vote is called an election.

Voting is your chance to help to choose the people to run Europe, Ireland and your local area.

These people are called politicians.

Politicians decide things, which affect everyone such as how hospitals and schools are run.

You can decide to vote for a person if you agree with his or her ideas.

A politician is a member of a political party. A political party is a group of politicians who work together because they have similar ideas.

You can decide to vote for a political party if you agree with that party's opinions and ideas

## ★ Who can vote?

People aged 18 and over can vote. Your name must be on the Register of Electors. This is a list of everyone who can vote. If your name is not on this list you can fill in a form at the post office. If you are registered to vote you will get a polling card. Polling is another name for voting. The polling card will tell you where and when to vote. The place where you vote is called a polling station. The polling station is usually a school or a hall near where you live.

**YOUR VOTE COUNTS**  
**GO AND VOTE AND CONVINCING YOUR FRIENDS**  
**TO DO SO AS WELL**