

# Length of the election campaign and the electoral silence period in European Parliament elections

## SUMMARY

In May 2023, the Council of the EU confirmed that the next elections to the European Parliament – the tenth since the first direct elections in 1979 – will take place from 6 to 9 June 2024. Ahead of Election Day, candidates and political parties will carry out electoral activities throughout the European Union (EU) to explain their political programmes and vision for the future of the EU to the electorate. In the same context, debates will take place on national platforms and media.

Currently, election campaigns are largely regulated at national level, which means that there are differences among the EU Member States as to the activities allowed during the election period. However, election campaigns across the EU share a number of traits in terms of prohibitions and limitations. For example, although not all Member States have rules on whether and as from when election silence applies, most of them restrict election canvassing or the publishing of election polls on Election Day or immediately before the opening of the ballots.

Pending the adoption of an electoral reform intended to harmonise at least some of the aspects of the election campaign, such as its start (not earlier than 8 weeks before Election Day) and its end, as well as the start and the end of the election silence period (48 hours before Election Day), this briefing looks at the Member States' rules on the length of the election campaign period and the election silence period ahead of the European Parliament elections (European elections).

*This briefing is one in a series published in the run-up to the 2024 European Parliament elections. It does not focus on election advertising, election funding or how election procedures are regulated in the individual Member States.*



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## Introduction

During election campaigns in the EU, candidates and political parties carry out communication and other activities to inform and engage with the electorate about their plans and policies in the effort to win support. These activities are subject to legal requirements seeking to ensure that a host of [objectives](#) are met, including fair treatment of candidates, impartiality, fair access to broadcasting and the media, and freedom of information.

In the same vein, the date and the maximum duration of the election campaign are often subject to legal regulation. Additionally, certain EU Member States impose a silence period during which political campaigning, including the dissemination of partisan messages, is prohibited, to give voters a chance to reflect and decide ahead of Election Day (period of reflection), and to ease the campaign pressure on them before they cast their vote. In other words, Member States may provide for a 'cooling off period' to lower political tension and enable all those involved to take a step back from the heated debates. In many Member States, this period usually starts 24 hours before Election Day and ends when the polls close. Generally, all electoral activities during the silence period are banned, as is the dissemination of the results of public opinion polls relating to the elections. The Council of Europe's Venice Commission has stressed that excessively long silence periods should be avoided. Some Member States do not have a silence period but nevertheless prohibit campaigning on Election Day on the premises of polling stations and in their immediate proximity. As the Venice Commission has pointed out, the shift of election campaigning to online platforms makes it more difficult to respect and duly enforce the silence period. It has become particularly difficult to monitor and enforce the ban on publishing opinion polls on the internet and on social media platforms shortly before or on Election Day.

## The European Electoral Act

Already modified on [several occasions](#) after its initial adoption in [1976](#) (mainly in 2002 and 2018, although the latest amendments are not yet in force), the [European Electoral Act](#) (the 1976 Act) does not provide for a uniform electoral system applicable to all EU Member States in the elections to the European Parliament (European elections). It contains a set of common core principles that must be respected by the Member States' national laws applicable to the European elections. The original act did not contain any provisions on the length of the election campaign or of the silence period. In 2018, the Council of the EU agreed on amending the 1976 Act (Council Decision (EU, Euratom) [2018/994](#)). This decision is not yet in force, as a few Member States are yet to approve it in accordance with their constitutional requirements. The decision does not contain any specific provisions on the length of the election campaign.

During its ninth legislative term, Parliament expressed a clear desire to harmonise the rules on the European elections in its [draft legislative act](#) adopted in May 2022 and seeking to repeal the 1976 Act. The draft legislative act proposes to further harmonise [several aspects](#) of the electoral procedure applicable to European elections, including by introducing more detailed provisions for the **electoral calendar**. In addition to obliging Member States to finalise the electoral roll at least 14 weeks before Election Day and fixing the deadline for tabling the list of candidates for elections at 12 weeks before Election Day, [Article 17](#) proposes to introduce common provisions for election campaigns. Among others things, it envisages that **election campaigning would not start until 8 weeks before Election Day** and that **the Member States would implement a European electoral reserve period (electoral silence) of 48 hours ahead of Election Day**. During these 48 hours, it would not be permitted to ask electors about their voting intentions.

## Overview of electoral rules in the EU-27<sup>1</sup>

As shown in the table in Annex 1, 10 Member States (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden) have no specific rules on the length of the election campaign period. For those that do, the length of the election campaign varies from

12 days in Portugal to 120 days in Latvia and 4 months in Belgium. In France, the election campaign starts on the second Monday preceding Election Day. In Spain, the start of the election campaign is set by law at 15 days before Election Day. The longest statutory periods exist in Lithuania (at least 6 months), Poland (at least 89 days) and Czechia (90 days), while Hungary provides for 50 days. Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia provide for 30 days. In some Member States, such as Czechia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia, the election campaign starts on the day of the official announcement of the elections to the European Parliament.

Sixteen Member States apply a silence period ahead of Election Day. Notwithstanding the different ways in which the provisions regarding this period have been worded, it predominantly includes the day before the election and the day on which it is held. In other words, it starts 24 hours prior to Election Day and ends once the polls close (this is the case in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain). In Lithuania, the silence period starts 7 hours prior to Election Day. In France, it starts at midnight on the Saturday preceding Election Day. In Slovakia, it covers the 48 hours preceding Election Day. Even among those Member States that do apply a silence period, national provisions vary: some restrict or prohibit the publication of public opinion polls or surveys (e.g. France, Portugal and Slovakia) and electoral canvassing (Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia), or apply a broader set of restrictions covering electoral canvassing, the publication of opinion polls and political advertising in the mass media, in different combinations. In Poland, for example, the silence period covers electoral 'agitation' (electioneering), meetings, rallies, demonstrations as well as the publication of opinion polls. Cyprus prohibits meetings, debates, political advertising and the publication of opinion polls.

Concerning the publication of opinion polls aimed at detecting the voting intentions of the electorate, the majority of the Member States with an explicit silence period (11 out of 16) prohibit the publication of the results of opinion polls during the silence period. An exception to this rule – i.e. the prohibition lasts longer – are Italy, where the publication of opinion polls is prohibited during the 15 days prior to Election Day, followed by Cyprus (7 days) and Spain (5 days).

As shown in the table in Annex 1, 11 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden) appear not to have put in place explicit provisions for a silence period extending beyond Election Day. Nevertheless, in nine of these Member States certain activities – most typically conducting and disseminating opinion polls, but also electoral canvassing and electoral advertising – are prohibited on Election Day. Hungary, for example, restricts all three: it prohibits campaigning activities and electoral canvassing in polling stations and (within a perimeter of 150 metres) around them, as well as political advertising and the publication of opinion polls. This latter prohibition starts 7 days before Election Day. In Austria, electoral advertising, in particular addressing voters by posting or distributing election appeals or lists of candidates, is prohibited on Election Day in the vicinity of polling stations. In Czechia, the law prohibits political parties, political movements, coalitions and candidates from canvassing on the premises of the polling stations and their immediate vicinity. Moreover, the publication or dissemination of pre-electoral and electoral surveys is prohibited as from the third day preceding Election Day until the end of the vote. Denmark has specific requirements regarding the format and posting of outdoor campaign posters. It furthermore prohibits paid political advertising on television. Overall, Austria, Estonia, Finland and the Netherlands mainly restrict or prohibit electoral canvassing on Election Day, but do not provide for a silence period prior to Election Day. More specifically, Finland prohibits the holding of speeches or the making of written or printed solicitations addressed to the voters at polling stations. Likewise in the Netherlands, no activity likely to influence the voters may be carried out in polling stations on Election Day. Conversely, Luxembourg does not prohibit canvassing activities but only the publication, distribution of and commentary on opinion polls related to the election in the 5 days preceding Election Day.

Within the same group of 11 Member States, Belgium and Sweden have no restrictions on electoral canvassing activities and therefore have no silence period.

Finally, as mentioned in Annex 1, Ireland does not have any specific provisions on the silence period and is not among the 11 Member States mentioned above. Although Ireland has no legal provisions on the silence period, the guidelines of the Broadcasting Authority impose a moratorium on electioneering, references to elections, references to the merits of candidates or their policies in all areas of programming (newspapers, coverage of opinion polls and information announcements), as from 2 pm on the day before the elections and including Election Day.

## Election campaign and electoral silence in the EU-27

### Austria

There are no specific provisions on the length of the election campaign period or the electoral silence period. However, according to Section 45 of the Federal Act on the Election of Members of the European Parliament ([Europawahlordnung, EuWO](#)), on **the day of the election, no election advertising is allowed on the grounds surrounding the electoral polling stations, as delimited by the local authorities**, including by directly addressing voters and by posting or distributing calls to vote or lists of candidates. Under Section 45(3) of the EuWO, infractions entail a fine of up to €218 or, in the case of non-recoverability, a custodial sentence of up to 2 weeks, both imposed by the administrative authority.

### Belgium

According to [Article 5](#) of the 'Loi relative à la limitation et au contrôle des dépenses électorales engagées pour l'élection du Parlement européen' (Law on the limitation and control of election expenses incurred for the election to the European Parliament), the election campaign period starts **4 months before the day of the elections**. There are **no provisions on a silence period**.

### Bulgaria

Article 175 of the [Election Code](#) provides that the election campaign starts **30 days in advance of Election Day**. Article 182 of the Election Code provides that no canvassing is permitted during a period starting **24 hours prior to Election Day and continuing throughout Election Day itself**. Article 205 of the Election Code provides that results of public opinion polls relating to the elections may not be made public in any form whatsoever during a period starting **24 hours before Election Day and ending with the announcement of the closing of the polls**.

### Croatia

According to Article 21 of [The Republic of Croatia – European Parliamentary Elections Act](#), 'campaign publicity **shall commence on the date of release of the legally valid proposed slates** (electoral lists), and it shall conclude 24 hours prior to the election date'. The same article in paragraph 2 prohibits campaign publicity, the release of poll results and unofficial election results, the publication of photographs in the mass media, and any statements by and interviews with the heads of slates or candidates and citation of their statements or written works, for a period starting **24 hours prior to Election Day and ending with the closing of the polls**.

According to Article 7 of the same act, the Croatian president takes the decision to announce the elections to the European Parliament, with a minimum of 60 days between the date of the announcement and the date of the elections. According to Article 17 of the same act, draft slates must be received by the National Elections Commission no later than 14 days after the date on which the announcement of the elections was made.

### Cyprus

The rules on national legislative elections apply to the European elections by virtue of [Part VII of Law 2004](#) (10(I)/2004). Article 2 of the [Law on the election of members of the House of Representatives](#) sets the start of the pre-election period at **3 months** before the date of the elections. According to

Article 63 of this law, the electoral reserve period (i.e. electoral silence) **starts at [midnight](#) on the penultimate day prior to Election Day and lasts throughout Election Day (i.e. starts at midnight on Friday for elections held on Sunday)**. During this period, **no one is allowed to organise or take part in any public meeting** to hear any speech or debate on any matter relating, whether directly or indirectly, to elections. In addition, **it is prohibited to transmit, advertise or publish any news or communication**, whether freely or against payment, and whether having a direct or an indirect **relation to the elections**. Political or coalition leaders may make statements upon leaving the polls, but newspapers circulating on the day before the elections may only publish news from the previous day's election rallies. As regards the publication of polls, however, the prohibition lasts longer, as according to Article 63(A), the **publication of the results of polls** directly or indirectly related to the elections **is prohibited for 7 days before Election Day**.

## Czechia

Article 59(3) of the [Act on Elections to the European Parliament](#) (Act No 62/2003) stipulates that the election campaign period **starts on the day of the announcement of the European elections** and ends on the day of the announcement of the final results. **Furthermore, this period starts at least 90 days prior to the elections**, in line with Article 3(2) of the same act, which stipulates that European elections must be announced by the president of the Republic at least 90 days in advance of Election Day. [Article 59\(7\)](#) of the same act provides that the **results of pre-electoral and electoral surveys may not be published** in any way during the period starting on the **third day preceding the date of the European elections and ending at the closing of the vote in Czechia**. Moreover, Article 59(9) states that during Election Day, **canvassing** for political parties, political movements, coalitions and candidates **is prohibited in the buildings where the polling stations are located and in their immediate vicinity**. Paragraphs (10) and (11) of Article 59 prohibit the disclosure by members of the precinct electoral committees of any information on the conduct of the elections and any publication of results until the last polling stations are closed in the territory of the EU.

## Denmark

The Danish electoral law does not have any rules requiring that election campaigns be of a certain length or that a silence period be introduced. Campaigning is thus also allowed on Election Day [except](#) inside polling stations and their immediate surroundings. However, there is a ban on electioneering on the voting premises or elsewhere in the immediate vicinity while voters are casting their votes (Article 50 of the [Folketing \(Parliamentary\) Elections Act](#)). Additionally, there are rules on the format and posting of outdoor campaign posters: the 2014 Official Roads Act stipulates that **election posters for European Parliament elections may be displayed no earlier than at 12.00 pm (midday) on the fourth Saturday before Election Day**. Furthermore, provisions in the 2014 Official Roads Act, the 2015 Private Road Act, the 2011 Act on Radio and Television Operations prohibit paid political advertising on television from the time elections are announced until after Election Day.

## Estonia

The [European Parliament Election Act](#) does not set an election campaign period or envisage a silence period. However, §5 of the same law **prohibits election campaigning at polling stations**.

## France

According to Article 15 of [Law No 77-729 of 7 July 1977](#), the election campaign **may begin from the second Monday preceding the date of the election**. During the day before the election and on the day of the election, **no election polls may be published, broadcast, or commented on by any means whatsoever**. For the election of Members to the European Parliament, this prohibition takes effect throughout the national territory **as of midnight on the Saturday preceding the polls. This**



**prohibition ends at the closing of the last polling station on the metropolitan territory** (Article 11 of [Law No 77-808 of July 19 1977](#) on the publication and distribution of certain opinion polls).

## Finland

The Finnish [Election Act](#) does not specify the length of the election campaign or envisage a silence period. However, [Section 72](#) of the Election Act provides that during the voting period, no speeches, printed or written exhortations may be made at polling stations or in their immediate vicinity, or otherwise influence or attempt to influence the freedom of voters to vote.

## Germany

There are no specific rules on the period during which election campaigning may or may not take place. According to the [Federal Returning Officer](#), 'the beginning and the end of an election campaign are not laid down by law. Generally, there is a preparation phase, the pre-election period and the "heated" phase of the election campaign (final phase). The parties' pre-election period starts months before the election, usually when the Federal President fixes the election date (about one year before Election Day)'. Section 4 of the [European Elections Act](#), in conjunction with Section 32 of the [Federal Election Act](#), stipulates that: '(1) **During polling hours, no influence may be exerted on voters by word, sound, writing or image** and no signatures may be collected in or around the building in which the polling station is located as well as directly in front of the entrance to the building. (2) The publication of results of surveys conducted among voters after they have cast their votes shall be inadmissible before the end of polling hours.'

## Greece

The [Law on European Elections, No 4255/14](#), as recently amended, provides in its Article 1 that 'The day and duration of the voting is defined each time by a presidential decree, issued at the proposal of the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior at least thirty days before the day set for the voting'. Therefore, the **duration of the election campaign for European elections is defined counting backwards from the day set for voting** to the day following the publication of the presidential decree announcing the European elections (this decree is issued at least 30 days before the election date). [Article 16](#) of the same law – amending Article 49 of [Presidential Decree 26/2012](#) – prohibits the publication of opinion polls on the voting intention of voters and the transmission in any way of the results of the polls, as well as their transmission and retransmission in any way by the media **one day before the elections to the European Parliament and until 19.00 on Election Day**. Moreover, during the same period, political parties and candidates are prohibited from publishing or transmitting related materials through public and private free-to-air radio, TV stations and newspapers.

## Hungary

According to Section 139(1) of [Act XXXVI of 2013 on the Election Procedure](#), the election campaign **lasts from the 50th day before Election Day until the end of voting on Election Day**. The act **has no provisions on a silence period**. However, Section 143(1) provides that no campaigning is allowed on Election Day a) in polling stations and in the buildings where polling stations are located; b) in a public area within a distance of 150 metres from the entrance of a building used to access the polling station located within that building; c) outside the area defined in point b) in a manner that can potentially influence the will of voters staying within that area. Similarly, the act prohibits the holding of election rallies and the broadcasting of political advertisements on Election Day, respectively under Section 145(2) and Section 147 (4a). On the other hand, Section 150 prohibits those conducting opinion polls from entering the buildings in which polling stations are located and in any way disturbing voters on Election Day. The results of opinion polls (exit polls) cannot be made public before voting is over. The National Election Commission may provide guidelines to the election bodies to ensure the uniform interpretation of the legislation related to elections (Section 51 (1)).

## Ireland

There are no specific provisions on the length of the election campaign or the electoral reserve period (silence period). According to the [Guidelines](#) of the Broadcasting Authority, however, a moratorium applies to elections whereby from 2 pm on the day before Election Day and throughout the day of the poll until polling stations close, broadcasting certain activities, such as electioneering, but also making references to elections or to the merits of candidates or their policies, is prohibited. The moratorium extends to all areas of programming, including newspaper reviews, coverage of opinion polls, and information announcements.

## Italy

According to Article 4 of [Law 28/2000](#) on provisions for equal access to the media during electoral and referendum campaigns and for political communication, special rules apply to political communication over radio and television as of the **day on which elections are called**. Moreover, additional specific rules are applicable from the date of submission of candidacies. The rules aim to ensure pluralism, equal treatment, objectivity, impartiality and fairness in the broadcasting of both information programmes (while also respecting freedom of information) and of programmes involving political communication. From the **date on which elections are called and up to and including the penultimate day prior to Election Day**, newspapers and periodicals that intend to disseminate electoral political messages, with the exception of the official press of political parties and movements, must give timely notice in the publications published, in order to afford candidates and political forces appropriate access to the publication spaces on equal terms. [Political campaigning](#) in public places or places open to the public may take place until **midnight of the penultimate day preceding the day of the vote** (Article 9, Law No 212/1956, as amended by Article 8, Law No 130/1975). From this point on, including on Election Day, the following are prohibited: campaign rallies, electoral meetings, the re-posting of printed materials, wall posters or others, and propaganda posters. On Election Day, all forms of electioneering within a distance of 200 metres from the entrances of polling stations are prohibited. **It is forbidden to make public or otherwise disseminate the results of opinion polls during the 15 days preceding Election Day**, even if such polls were conducted over a period preceding the period of the ban.

## Latvia

According to Sections 1 and 2 of the [Pre-election Campaign Law](#), the **pre-election campaign for European elections lasts from the 120th day before the elections until Election Day**. Concerning the silence period, **1 day prior to Election Day and on the day itself**, Section 32 prohibits the **placement of pre-election campaign materials** in electronic mass media radio programmes and broadcasts, in public outdoor and indoor areas and in publications, and in the premises of public authorities and of certain major companies. It also prohibits conducting campaigns as a paid service on public electronic communication networks, including on the internet (this prohibition does not apply to websites of political parties and their associations). Likewise, on Election Day and 30 days prior to Election Day, it is prohibited to include campaign materials in TV programmes and broadcasts of an electronic mass medium, with the exception of the state-ensured free broadcasting time. Discussion programmes produced by electronic mass media are not considered as placement of pre-election campaign materials if campaigners do not receive payment for the production and distribution of such programmes.

## Lithuania

According to Article 12 of the [Electoral Code of the Republic of Lithuania](#), European elections are held on a Sunday within the same period in which they are held in all EU Member States. Elections are announced and their date is set by the Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament) no later than 6 months before the Sunday of the specified period. **The election campaign starts as soon as the announcement for the election is made**. Under Article 103 of the Electoral Code, the election

campaign must be discontinued **7 hours before the start of the election; this measure lasts throughout the polling day** until the closing of polls. This prohibition does not apply in certain cases and therefore the following activities are allowed: i) outdoor political advertising displayed at a minimum distance of 50 metres from the buildings in which polling stations are located; the last working day prior to the discontinuation of the election campaign is the latest moment by which these activities can be carried out; and ii) the free dissemination by political campaigners of information (messages, recordings) that does not constitute electioneering, on websites and personal network accounts belonging to political campaigners and candidates nominated by them. During the period of early voting, election campaign activities are prohibited in the polling stations or within 50 metres of the building in which the vote takes place.

## Luxembourg

There are no specific provisions on the length of the election campaign period or the electoral silence period. The [Electoral Code](#), adopted on 18 February 2003, (Articles 1–116ter and 280–346) lays down the rules applicable to European elections. However, Article 3 of the [Law of 14 December 2015](#) on opinion polls states that publishing, distributing and commenting on **opinion polls are prohibited during the 5 days preceding Election Day**. Article 1 defines opinion polls as any opinion poll directly or indirectly related to the elections and adds that 'voting simulation operations carried out on the basis of opinion polls are treated in the same way as opinion polls for the purposes of the present law'.

## Malta

There are no specific national provisions on an election campaign period. Concerning the silence period, Article 65 of the General Elections Act ([CAP. 354](#)) **forbids public meetings or public demonstrations on the day immediately preceding the commencement of voting and on the day fixed for voting**. Article 114 of the same act extends this prohibition – covering the day of the elections and the day preceding it – to publication on broadcast media, newspapers or other means of communication intended to influence voters. Moreover, Article 66 of the same act provides that: 'During the time fixed for voting **at any polling place**, no person, other than a person waiting to vote, shall loiter **within a distance of fifty metres from that polling place** nor shall any person within the said distance of fifty metres make political propaganda in any manner. Any political party club within the distance of fifty metres from the centre of the width of the door used as an entrance to the polling place shall be kept closed on polling day'. Finally, Article 67 establishes that no 'person shall congregate during voting, in any street, square or other place, leading from the place of residence of any voter to any polling place, in such numbers or otherwise in such manner as to be likely to intimidate any voter, or to obstruct his approach to or from a polling place, or to lead to a breach of the peace.'

## The Netherlands

The relevant electoral legislation ([Kieswet](#), Section V, [Chapter Y \(Art 1-39\)](#)) has no specific provisions on the length of the election campaign period or the electoral silence period. However, on the day of the elections, on the premises of polling stations there can be no activities that can potentially influence voters in their decision (Article 36 Chapter J). The Electoral Code has no provisions on activities outside polling stations.

## Poland

Article 104 of the Polish [Electoral Code](#) stipulates that the election campaign period starts **on the day of the promulgation of the act convening the elections** by the competent authority and **ends 24 hours before Election Day**. Moreover, the Electoral Code provides that the campaign period starts on the day when Election Day is announced. Therefore, reference must be made to Article 331(2) of the Electoral Code, which provides that the Polish president should issue an order for the holding of an election, by means of a decree, no later than 90 days before Election Day.



Consequently, the **election campaign preceding the elections to the European Parliament in Poland lasts at least 89 days but can also be longer**. According to Article 107, during the silence period, which starts 24 hours before Election Day and goes on throughout it: 'conducting election agitation, including convening meetings, organising marches and demonstrations, making speeches and disseminating election materials' is prohibited. Election canvassing is prohibited at the polling stations and on their premises. Conducting opinion polls (exit polls) is not prohibited by law on Election Day, but the results may be published only after the elections have ended (immediately after the closing of polling stations).

## Portugal

According to Article 10 of the Law on Elections to the European Parliament ([ELEP](#)) 'The provisions of the legislation applicable to the election of Members of the Assembly of the Republic shall apply to the action and discipline of the election campaign of Members of the European Parliament, including the respective right to airtime, with the duration of the campaign reduced to **twelve days**.' The same article stipulates that when general and European elections are held on the same date, the campaign for the European elections must be of the same length as that for the Assembly.

According to Article 53 of [Law No 14/79 of 16 May 1979](#): the election campaign period ends **at midnight on the second day before the day designated for the elections**. According to Article 10(1) of [Law No 10/2000 of 21 of June 2000](#), publishing, disseminating as well as commenting on, analysing and making projections about the **results of any opinion poll or survey is prohibited from the end of the campaign period to the closing of the polls throughout the country**.

## Romania

According to Article 35 of [Law No 33/2007](#), the election campaign period lasts **30 days** and ends at 07.00 on the Saturday preceding **Election Day**, which is always held on a Sunday. On Election Day, **voting starts at 07.00** and ends at 21.00 (Article 46). The electoral silence period starts 24 hours before the start of voting and lasts throughout the voting period. On Election Day, the publication of exit polls before the closing of the polls is forbidden ([Article 37](#)).

## Slovakia

Rules on the election campaign are defined by [Act No 181/2004 Coll.](#) on the election campaign and [Act No 331/2003 Coll. on the elections to the European Parliament](#). The official election campaign period begins **on the day of the publication of the decision calling for elections** in the Collection of Laws (Official Journal) and **ends 48 hours before Election Day** (Section 2, para. 2 of Act No 181/2004 Coll.). For example, the decision on the 2019 European elections was published on 4 February 2019 and the campaign lasted until 23 May; for 109 days. A ban on the publication of election poll results takes effect **48 hours before the day of the election and lasts throughout that day until the end of voting**. The public opinion polls (exit polls) that are carried out on Election Day can only target voters who have left polling stations and only in such a way as to prevent the risk of influencing other voters or disrupting the voting process. Furthermore, it is forbidden to publish the results of public opinion polls before the end of voting (Section 17, paras 3-5 of [Act No 181/2004 Coll.](#)). Similarly, §19 of [Act No 331/2003 Coll.](#) on the elections to the European Parliament stipulates that 'to send or publish information about candidates, political parties or coalitions in their favour or against them in word, writing, sound or image in radio broadcasts and television broadcasts, in the mass media, in the buildings where the election commissions are located, and in their immediate surroundings is **prohibited 48 hours before the start of the election and on the day of the election**. It is **forbidden to publish the results of election polls on Election Day**'.

## Slovenia

The election campaign period may begin **no earlier than 30 days before Election Day and end no later than 24 hours before Election Day**. According to Article 2 of the [Election and Referendum Campaign Act](#) (ZVRK), read in conjunction with the [Act on the election of deputies from the Republic of Slovenia to the European Parliament](#) (ZVPEP), political campaigning is not allowed during the electoral silence period, which starts 24 hours before Election Day. Moreover, 24 hours before Election Day and **until the closure of polling stations, the publication of opinion polls and surveys on candidates, lists of candidates, political parties and referendum questions is not permitted** (Article 5(2) of the Election and Referendum Campaign Act, read in conjunction with the ZVPEP). Likewise, during the silence period, it is forbidden to place new posters relating to the elections.

## Spain

The election campaign period **lasts 15 days and ends at 00 hours on the day before Election Day**. According to Article 51 of the [Organic Law 5/1985 of 19 June 1985](#), this day is for reflection (silence period), and no election campaigning can take place (Article 53) on it. In addition, the publication of **opinion polls and surveys is prohibited within the 5 days preceding Election Day** (Article 69.7 of the [Organic Law 5/1985 of 19 June 1985](#)). Polls can be published once polling stations have closed on the day of the elections.

## Sweden

There are no specific provisions on the length of the election campaign period or the electoral reserve period (electoral silence period).

## MAIN REFERENCES

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> This section looks at the national provisions in the 27 EU Member States on the length of the electoral campaign and silence periods in relation to European Parliament elections (European elections). It has been compiled on the basis of the information provided by the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation ([ECPRD](#)) and EPRS (for Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden). The data were verified in July 2023 by country specialists from the Members' Research Service of EPRS.

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## Annex 1

## Provisions in the national legislation of the 27 EU Member States

Member State	Start of election campaign period	Silence period
Austria	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Belgium	4 months prior to Election Day	No specific provisions
Bulgaria	30 days prior to Election Day	24 hours prior to Election Day and during Election Day
Croatia	On the date when the legally valid proposed electoral lists are published	24 hours prior to Election Day and during Election Day
Cyprus	3 months prior to Election Day	Day of the election and the day prior to that day
Czechia	On the day of the announcement of the European elections but at least 90 days prior to Election Day, ending upon the announcement of results	No specific provisions
Denmark	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Estonia	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
France	Second Monday preceding the date of the election	As of midnight on the Saturday preceding Election Day until the closing of the last polling station on the metropolitan territory
Finland	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Germany	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Greece	30 days prior to Election Day	24 hours prior to Election Day and until 19.00 on Election Day
Hungary	50 days prior to Election Day until end of voting on Election Day	No specific provisions
Ireland	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Italy	On the day of the announcement of the date of the election	As of midnight on the penultimate day preceding Election Day and during that day
Latvia	120th day prior to Election Day	Election Day and day prior to Election Day
Lithuania	On the day when the date of Election Day is announced, or at	7 hours prior to Election Day and during Election Day until closing of polls

	least 6 months before Election Day. Election Day is scheduled for a Sunday within the period set for European elections	
Luxembourg	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Malta	No specific provisions	Day preceding commencement of voting and Election Day
The Netherlands	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Poland	On the day of the promulgation of the act convening the elections	24 hours prior to Election Day and during Election Day
Portugal	12 days	As of midnight on the penultimate day before Election Day and during Election Day
Romania	30 days prior to Election Day	24 hours prior to the start of voting on Election Day and during Election Day
Slovakia	On the day of the publication of the decision calling for elections	48 hours prior to Election Day and during Election Day
Slovenia	No earlier than 30 days before the day of voting	At least 24 hours prior to Election Day and during Election Day
Spain	15 days prior to Election Day	As of 0000 on the day prior to Election Day and during Election Day
Sweden	No specific provisions	No specific provisions

Data source: EPRS.