



## Election Guidelines

**Election Campaigns for - the European Parliament across the UK  
- Local Government in England**

**Polling Day - 4th June 2**

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**The Election Period and when the Guidelines come into effect**

The election period as defined by Parliament will begin on April 28th, twenty five working days before polling day on June 4<sup>th</sup> Nominations close on May 7<sup>th</sup>

These guidelines come into effect from **on April 28th**

and continue until the close of polls at **22 on June 4th**

However, election campaigning is likely to begin be







These bodies will be sitting during the elections and the UK government will

Programmes may decide to use either candidates or party representatives. But if a candidate from one of the parties is invited to take part, the other participants should, where at all possible, also be candidates (see below [3.2a Welsh Language Services](#)). In exceptional circumstances, if a candidate is genuinely unavailable, the opportunity may be offered instead to a suitable party representative from within the electoral area (e.g. party official or agent) but it should normally be made clear to the audience that the missing candidate was invited and why they were unable to take part. If a party declines to put forward any representative the item/programme will go ahead without them.

Full-length reports (e.g. 3 or 4 minute packages) about specific electoral areas should refer – as a minimum - to an online list of all candidates and parties standing. If such a report is being broadcast several times on the same channel in a day, the online list of candidates should be referred to on each occasion and at least once the list should feature visually or verbally. For longer items, especially where only major candidates are receiving significant coverage, such as debates – or, where there is no online list available for the relevant electoral area - then the candidates should be listed, visually or verbally.

Before the close of nominations (May 7<sup>th</sup>) reports referring to the list of candidates should make it clear that these are “known candidates so far.”

### **3 2 Use of Candidates in issue based packages**

Programmes are now able to use candidates more freely to discuss local or regional issues or national issues across a number of regions or councils. But there remains a responsibility to be fair between the parties and between candidates.

In order to achieve fairness across the board, when programmes decide to use a candidate in a package or debate, the other participants should also be invited to participate in the same package or debate.





There is no certain solution to the problem of organised lobbying. However, all sites will be alert to the danger of distortion caused by organised

- polls can be wrong. There are real dangers in only reporting the most “newsworthy” polls – i.e. those which, on a one-off basis, show dramatic movement.

So, the general rules and guidance about reporting polls need to be scrupulously followed. They are:

- not to lead a news bulletin or programme simply with the results of a voting intention poll;
- not to headline the results of a voting intention poll unless it has prompted a story which itself deserves a headline and reference to the poll’s findings is necessary to make sense of it;
- not to rely on the interpretation given to a poll’s results by the organisation or publication which commissioned it: look at the questions, the results and the trend;
- to report the findings of voting intentions polls in the context of trend. The trend may consist of the results of all major polls over a period or may be limited to the change in a single pollster’s fi

No opinion poll may be published on polling day, or - for the European election - until all the polls have closed across the European Union.

#### **5 4 Vox Pops**

The value of vox pops to programmes is to allow different sides of an issue in question to be expressed through the voices of the man and woman in the street. But the context should always make it clear that they are an expression of an argument, not an indication of the weight of opinion on either side. It follows that special care must be taken with vox pops during an election campaign to edit them in such a way as to ensure different sides of the issue are covered.

#### **5 5 Emails**

The same principle applies to all e-mails we broadcast. E-mails offer immediacy and interactivity to many programmes, but they too are an expression of opinion, not an indication of the weight of opinion on one side or the other of a question. What matters is the balance of what we broadcast, not the balance of those we receive.

Programme makers should be particularly alert to organised e-mail campaigns by parties and pressure groups. If mass mailings are suspected during the Election Period, e-mail contributors may be asked to include their address and telephone number so that checks can be run purely for that purpose.

During the Election Period, we will not broadcast numbers of e-mails received on either side of any issue connected to the campaign.

#### **5 6 SMS Text Messaging**

Similarly, programme-makers should be as rigorous about establishing the origins of material derived from text messages as they are about material from other sources. We should carefully scrutinize texts before using them.

Essentially, this is no different from a phone-in programme. Just as with a phone in, producers must take appropriate steps to ensure veracity of the message e.g. if a text message is received that appears to be from a person in the public eye, the programme should check the source before publishing it on air/online. Checks could include calling/texting the user back to ask for further verification.

If the programme decides to edit a text message for length, care should be taken to ensure the sender's opinion is still fairly and accurately presented. Producers must ensure that text votes are not translated into anything that could be construed either as a representation of public opinion as a whole, or the BBC's opinion. Any proposal to conduct text voting on any political issue





**Scotland 2 4 European Election**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>of the Vote</b>
Labour	2	26.4
SNP	2	19.7
Conservatives	2	17.8
Lib Dem	1	13.1
Scottish Greens	0	6.8
UKIP	0	6.7
Scottish Socialist	0	5.2
Op Christian Vote	0	1.8
BNP	0	1.7

(All other parties below )

**Wales - 2 4 European Election**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>of the Vote</b>
Labour	2	32.5
Conservatives	1	19.4
Plaid	1	17.4
UKIP	0	10.5
Lib Dem	0	10.5
Green	0	3.6
BNP	0	3.0
Forward Wales	0	1.9

(All other parties below )

**Great Britain - 2 4 European Election**

(England, Scotland, Wales – combined)

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>of the Vote</b>
Conservative	27	26.7
Labour	19	22.6
UKIP	12	16.2
Lib Dem	12	14.9
Green	2	6.2
SNP	2	1.4
Plaid	1	1.0
BNP	0	4.9

**Aiii Party Coverage for broadcasts across the UK**

Parties which gained substantial representation at the last European election are:

- Labour, Conservative, Lib Dems and UKIP.

Where coverage relates purely to the European Election or matters decided in the European Parliament, these parties will receive similar levels of coverage.

The Green Party of England and Wales won significant support and representation and should receive some coverage, proportionate to the four leading parties.

UK-wide programmes must ensure that, where either SNP or Plaid Cymru or both have distinctive policies on matters decided in the European Parliament these parties are featured in a substantial number of items on such matters in which the UK-wide parties take part. This should not preclude network programmes using SNP and Plaid Cymru spokespeople on other major election news stories.

All parties which are standing a full slate of candidates (ie as many candidates as there are seats available) in one or more of the nations of Great Britain will have – as a minimum – their manifesto launch (or equivalent event) covered on appropriate network TV and radio news and current affairs programmes.

All parties which are standing candidates, as well as serious independent candidates, will, where appropriate and possible, have their manifesto launches (or some equivalent event) covered online.

**Aiv For BBC Scotland**

The main parties in Scotland are Labour, SNP, Conservatives and Lib Dems.

These parties will receive similar levels of coverage.

Other parties fielding a full slate of candidates in Scotland (i.e. 6) will have – as a minimum – their manifesto launch (or equivalent event) covered on appropriate TV and radio news and current affairs programmes.

Parties not standing a complete list of candidates, but which are running serious campaigns, should also receive coverage at some stage in the campaign, as should serious independent candidates.



**Av For BBC Wales**

The main parties in Wales are Labour, Conservative, Plaid Cymru and Lib Dems.

These parties will receive similar levels of coverage.

Other parties fielding a full slate of candidates in Wales (i.e. 4) will have – as a minimum – their manifesto launch (or equivalent event) covered on appropriate TV and radio news and current affairs programmes.

Parties not standing a complete list of candidates, but which are running serious campaigns, should also receive coverage at some stage in the campaign, as should serious independent candidates.

**Avi For English Regions and Local Radio**

There were some variations in voting patterns and representation across the nine European Parliamentary regions in England at the 2004 European elections. In their own areas, regional and local programmes should take account of those differing levels of support in the way they cover issues relating to the European election. (see [Appendix D](#) for regional breakdown in 2004)

For each party standing a complete list of candidates in their region, as a minimum, each English Region should carry at least two TV items during the campaign - either separate pieces or as part of a longer package. At least one of these series of items should be on the 6.30 programme. Parties not standing a complete list of candidates in their region, but which are running serious campaigns, should also receive coverage at some stage in the campaign, as should serious independent candidates.

Local radio stations should do at least one substantial item during each week of the campaign on each party standing a complete list of candidates in their region. Parties not standing a complete list of candidates in their region, but which are running serious campaigns, should also receive coverage at some stage in the campaign, as should serious independent candidates.

**Avii Lists of candidates on BBC Online**

For the European elections, BBC News Online, the Nations' and English Regions' websites (in close liaison with each other to ensure a consistent BBC wide approach) will publish a complete list of candidates in each European region, which can be referred to by programmes.

**APPENDIX B****Bi European Parliamentary Election in Northern Ireland**

In the European election, Northern Ireland has a different electoral system from the rest of the UK – Single Transferable Vote. For this reason, all parties, irrespective of size and electoral support, normally field only a single candidate for the three seats available.

The level of coverage given to political parties in Northern Ireland is based on:

- their performance at the last equivalent election (i.e. the 2004 European election) in terms of representation and share of the vote
- their performance in subsequent elections
- other evidence of current electoral support.

**Bii Past Election Results****Northern Ireland 2 4 European Election-****Northern Ireland**

Elected:	<b>Jim Allister (DUP)</b> <b>Bairbre de Brun (SF)</b> <b>Jim Nicholson (UUP)</b>
Electorate:	<b>, 72,66</b>
Turnout:	<b>554,744 (51.72%)</b>
<b>Party share of poll-</b>	DUP 175,761 (32.00%) SF 144,541 (26.31%) UUP 91,164 (16.60%) SDLP 87,559 (15.94%) Ind 36,270 (6.60%) Soc Env



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Ci Party Coverage for Local Elections in England**

The three main parties in relation to the English local elections are Labour, the Conservatives and the Lib Dems.



**Dii Results of the 2 4 European Election by English Regions**

**East Midlands Scoreboard**

[Pre-Election Data](#)

**Turnout:** 1406706 (43.4%)

**Electorate:** 3241566

**Change:** 682973 (20.8%)

**Seats:** 6

	2004				1999/2001			
				C				A J
CON	371362	26.4	2	-1	-13.1	-10.9	3	3
UKIP	366498	26.1	2	2	18.5	25		0
LAB	294918	21	1	-1	-7.6			

**South East Scoreboard**

[Pre-Election Data](#)

**Turnout:** 2207417 (36.5%)  
**Change:** 717365 (11.8%)

**Electorate:** 6048349  
**Seats:** 10

	2004				1999/2001			
				C	C			A J
CON	776370	35.2	4	-1	-9.3	-7.7	5	5
UKIP	431111	19.5	2	1	9.8	17	1	1
LD	338342	15.3	2	0	0	-8.4	2	2
LAB	301398	13.7	1	-1	-6	-15.8	2	2
GRN	173351	7.9	1	1	0.4	7.1	1	0
BNP	64877	2.9	0	0	2.1			0
SCP	42861	1.9	0		1.9			
ED	29126	1.3	0		1.3			
RESP	13426	0.6	0		0.6			
PEAP								





**North East Scoreboard**

[Pre-Election Data](#)

**Turnout:** 780491 (40.8%)  
**Change:** 394750 (21.3%)

**Electorate:** 1911562  
**Seats:** 3



**London Scoreboard**

[Pre-Election Data](#)

**Turnout:** 1885449 (37.3%)

**Electorate:** 5056663

**Change:** 744224 (14.3%)

**Seats:** 9



