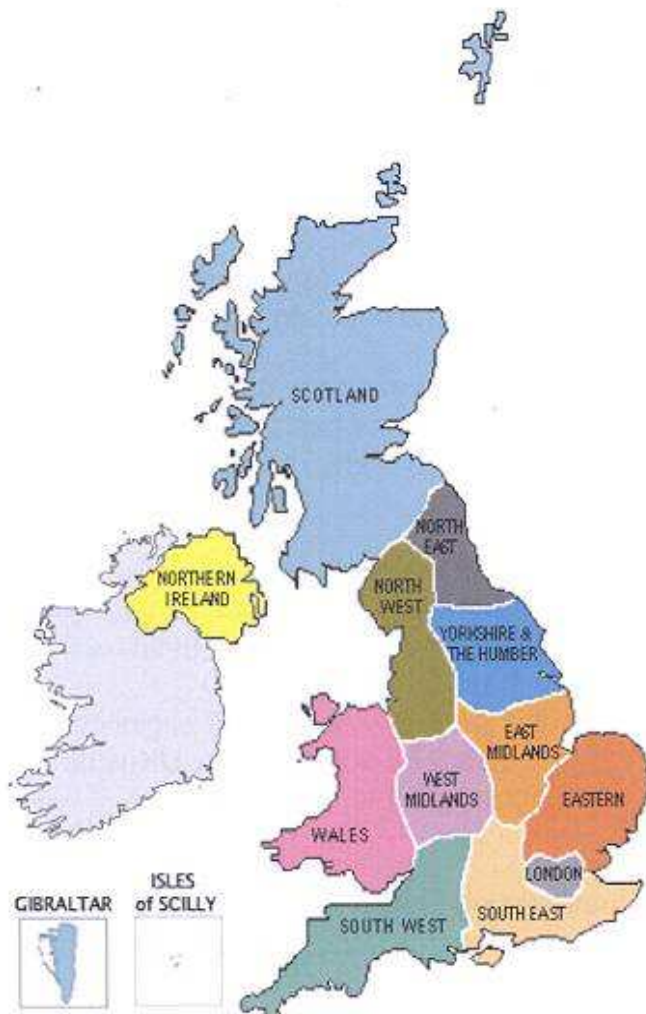


2009 European Parliamentary Elections in the UK

1. In England, Scotland and Wales, conducting elections is the responsibility of Returning Officers, who are appointed by individual local authorities. In Northern Ireland, there is a single Chief Electoral Officer.
2. At elections to the European Parliament, 11 Regional Returning Officers are appointed to co-ordinate the management of the elections. In Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer is the Returning Officer for all elections, including those to the European Parliament.
3. Regional Returning Officers have been given explicit powers to direct the work of Local Returning Officers.
4. All UK MEPs are elected on a regional basis from 12 electoral regions – Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and nine regions in England. The number of MEPs returned is roughly in proportion to the size of the electorate in each region. The UK's allocation in 2009 will be 72 MEPs.
5. British MEPs are elected on a regional list system. Northern Ireland elects 3 MEPs through a single transferable vote system, where the voter ranks candidates in order of preference.
6. The date of the poll for the EPE in the UK will be 4 June 2009.



[12 European Parliamentary electoral regions in the UK]

Planning and guidance

7. The 12 Regional Returning Officers (RROs) meet every month at a co-ordination meeting to plan the delivery of the election across the UK. This meeting is chaired by the Ministry of Justice.
8. One of the key logistical challenges at the forthcoming elections will be that of possible combination with local elections (in England) and a UK Parliamentary General Election if it is called. This also raises issues around which administrative boundaries the elections should be organised – UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries or local government boundaries.
9. There is also a working group of representatives nominated by each RRO chaired by the Commission. This group discusses matters of detail and in particular provides input into the development of the Commission's guidance and support programme.
10. The Commission will publish a guidance manual for use by the RROs and Local Returning Officers, planning and risk management templates, polling station handbooks and training materials for polling staff, count guidance, and guidance for candidates and agents. We will also produce updated guidance on integrity issues for police, political parties, Electoral Registration and Returning Officers, and quick guides for postal workers.
11. The published guidance will be supported by pre-election seminars and briefings, and post-election evaluation and reporting.

Public awareness activity

12. The Commission is planning to run a UK-wide advertising campaign ahead of the European Parliament elections on 4 June 2009 (and for the local elections in parts of England which may be combined with the Europeans).
13. The objectives are: to encourage voter registration ahead of the registration deadline of 19 May, with a particular emphasis on under-registered groups; and to provide information to voters on how to take part in the elections.
14. The campaign is likely to include TV, radio, press and online advertising with targeted activity to reach under-registered audiences such as young people, students, recent home-movers and particular minority ethnic communities. There will also be specific messaging to 'new' EU communities such as Polish citizens living in the UK about their eligibility to register and vote in the UK. The advertising will be supported by UK-wide PR activity, a free-phone helpline, and our public information website www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.
15. In addition to the main campaign, other targeted activity will focus on audiences such as members of the Armed Forces and British citizens living overseas.