European Election voting – how it works

Every country is free to use its own system for voting, and there are plenty of differences. The voting age, for example, is set by national law. Most countries elect their MEPs in one single big national constituency - so Germany has, for example, 96 German MEPs. But a handful – Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Poland, UK – have multiple constituencies. The most important common rule, however, is that countries must use a **proportional** system.

The following describes the UK system:

It is a **closed-list** system. Political parties make a list of their candidates in order from top to bottom preference. Voters then vote for the party they like – but they cannot vote for an individual person or affect the order of the people on the list. Depending on the results and the number of seats available, seats are handed out to the people on the list in order of preference. The top party list might get its top two or three people elected, the second-place may get one or two, and so on. The general principle, though, is that the party with the most votes should get the most seats – and who in the party gets those seats is decided by the party leadership.

Seats in the European Parliament representing England, Scotland and Wales are distributed according to the D'Hondt system, a type of proportional representation. The system was devised by Victor D'Hondt, a Belgian lawyer and mathematician active in the 19th Century.

The nations are divided into 11 electoral regions: nine in England, plus Scotland and Wales. For this election, Gibraltar votes as part of a combined constituency with the south-west of England. Parties vying for election submit a list of candidates to voters in each region.

- In the first round of counting the party with the most votes wins a seat for the candidate at the top of its list

- In the second round the winning party's vote is divided by two, and whichever party comes out on top in the re-ordered results wins a seat for their top candidate

- The process repeats itself, with the original vote of the winning party in each round being divided by one plus their running total of MEPs, until all the seats for the region have been taken

5 MEPs will be elected to represent the East Midlands. Here are the candidates:

Change UK
Kate Godfrey
Joan Pons Laplana
Narinder Sharma
Pankajkumar
Gulab
Emma Manley

Conservative
Emma McClarkin
Rupert Matthews
Tony Harper
Brendan Clarke-Smith
Thomas Randall

Green
Kat Boettge
Gerhard Lohmann-Bond
Liam McClelland
Daniel Wimberley
Simon Tooke

Independent Network
Nick Byatt
Marianne Overton
Daniel Simpson
Pearl Clarke
Nikki Dillon

Labour
Rory Palmer
Leonie Mathers
Tony Tinley
Nicolle Ndiweni
Gary Godden

Liberal Democrats
Bill Newton Dunn
Michael Mullaney
Lucy Care
Suzanna Austin
Caroline Kenyon

The Brexit Party
Annunziata Rees-Mogg
Jonathan Bullock
Matthew Patten
Tracy Knowles
Anna Bailey

UKIP
Alan Graves
Marietta King
Anil Bhatti
Fran Loi
John Evans

Independent
Simon Rood

So, for example, supposing that there is an election for four representatives, and four parties are standing:

	Party A		Party B		Party C		Party D	
Candidates	Amanda Alan Andrew Ann	Rd 3	Brian Brenda Bill Beth		Carol Charles Chris Colin	Rd 1 Rd 4	David Derek Diane Desmond	Rd 2
	The votes are cast for each party as follows:							
Round 1	12,000		9,000		19,000		16,000	
	Party C has most votes, so the first person on their list, Carol, is duly elected. Party C has their number of votes halved to go into round 2.							
Round 2	12,000		9,000		9,500		16,000	
	Party D now has most votes, so the first person on their list, David, is duly elected. Party D has their number of votes halved to go into round 3.							
Round 3	12,000		9,000		9,500		8,000	
	Party A has most votes this time, so the first person on their list, Amanda, is duly elected. Party A has their number of votes halved to go into round 4.							
Round 4	6,000		9,000		9,500		8,000	
	Party C has most votes again, so the next person on their list, Charles, is duly elected.							