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Questionnaire on the conduct of the 2024 European Parliament Elections - For Member States

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

The Commission will issue a report on the conduct of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament no later than one year after such elections.

Beyond looking at turnout and implementation of relevant EU law as previous reports that followed elections to the European Parliament, the upcoming report will also follow-up on the Commission recommendation on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament (the 'Recommendation'), adopted on 12 December 2023 as part of the Defence of Democracy package.

Information provided by Member States in response to this questionnaire will inform the Commission in the preparation of the post-elections report. It will also provide useful material for future discussions among Member States in the context of the European Cooperation Network on Elections (ECNE).

Following point 44 of the Recommendation, Member States are invited to transmit to the Commission, within 6 months after the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, information on the conduct of those elections in their territory, including on the measures implementing the Recommendation and, where applicable, relevant information on election observation by citizens.

You are kindly invited to reply to the following questions on behalf of your Member State as soon as possible **ideally by 18 November 2024**.

* Please select your country:

NL - Netherlands

* Please indicate the name of the authority on whose behalf you are replying to this questionnaire:

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

* Please add your email address:

postbus.verkiezingen@minbzk.nl

PART 1 – Follow-up to Commission recommendation on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament

1. Supporting voter turnout and inclusive participation in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament

The Commission's recommendation on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament included a call on each Member State to take a series of steps to support voter turnout and inclusive participation in elections. In this regard:

* 1.1. Please indicate the measures you took to facilitate, where applicable, voter and candidate registration for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

- [ ] providing a dedicated website
- [ ] sending information to members of electorate by mail
- [ ] online registration of voters or candidates
- [ ] electronic collection of support signatures for candidates
- [x] other (please complement below)
- [ ] voter and candidate registration is not necessary in my Member State

1.1.1. If other, please explain.

Voter registration:

- Dutch citizens residing in the Netherlands do not have to register to vote. Their municipality deduces whether a citizen has the right to vote, based on the national administration of personal civic information (in Dutch: Basis Registratie Persoonsgegevens).
- Dutch voters abroad who want to vote by mail on a Dutch candidate for the European Parliament have to register once. This is done through the website of the municipality of The Hague. They can only vote by mail if they have declared that they won't vote in another EU-country.
- Non Dutch citizens of another EU country are allowed to vote in the Netherlands. In that case, they have to register (once) with their municipality, using an Y32 form.

Candidate registration:

- Political parties who want to participate in the elections for the European Parliament and who want to have the name of their political party mentioned on the ballot, need to register their name (once) with the Electoral Council of the Netherlands (Kiesraad). This process is done on paper. Parties who do not register, can still participate in the elections, but do so without their name (they are called "List #" on the ballot).
- Candidates who want to participate in the elections for the European Parliament need to register with the Electoral Council of the Netherlands (Kiesraad). This process is done on paper.

More information (in English) on voter registration and candidate registration can be found here: https://english.kiesraad.nl/elections/elections-of-the-european-parliament

1.1.2. If applicable, please briefly describe the measures referred to in point 1.1 and how you ensured that they were easily accessible and user friendly.

* 1.2. Did you introduce or use complementary voting methods for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [ ] advance voting
- [ ] mobile voting
- [x] postal voting
- [ ] e-voting
- [x] other
- [ ] did not introduce or use complementary voting methods

1.2.1. If applicable, please describe briefly the complementary voting methods introduced or used.

Voting by proxy:
If a voter is registered as a Dutch voter abroad or if a voter isn't able to vote for other reasons, he or she can vote by proxy. This means a voter can authorise someone in the Netherlands to vote on their behalf. Voters can vote by proxy for a maximum of two other voters.

Postal voting:
Dutch voters who live abroad can vote per post. Voters receive a postal voting certificate, a ballot paper, the list of candidates, an envelope for the ballot paper, an addressed return envelope and instructions. Voters place this envelope, together with the signed postal voting certificate and a copy of an identity document, in the addressed return envelope and send it by post to the postal voting office or to a diplomatic or consular representation of the Netherlands or deliver it there personally.

* 1.3. When using ICT systems, also known as election technology, for example for monitoring the vote, counting the vote, communicating the results, or voting electronically, which of the measures described in the Commission's compendium on e-voting and other ICT practices and new cybersecurity compendium did you take?

- [x] using state of the art ICT
- [x] using trusted vendors
- [ ] including cybersecurity requirements in procurement and outsourcing contracts
- [ ] seeking broad consultations
- [x] ensuring effective testing and auditing
- [x] providing clear and easy-to-understand public information
- [x] making the use of ICT in elections easily accessible and user-friendly
- [ ] ensuring that no state, region or municipality is in a situation of long-term electoral dependency on a specific private provider
- [x] ensuring respect for data protection requirements supporting confidentiality of the vote
- [x] ensuring the existence of a protocol where an individual identifies an error to protect the secrecy of the vote
- [x] ensuring that election officials receive appropriate training
- [x] relying on secure digital identification
- [ ]

introducing specific measures to protect voters against potential coercion, such as the right to regret one's vote on election day

1.3.1. If applicable, please describe in more detail the measures taken.

Using state of the art ICT: our software supports modern operating systems and browsers.
Using trusted vendors: we have worked with the same vendor for many years.
Effective testing and auditing: we publish the audit report for the legal testing and pentesting on our website before the election day.
Respect data protection confidentiality of the vote: voting is done on paper ballots. The software only counts the numbers.
Ensuring protocol where errors identified protect secrecy: there is a process for voters to report errors. They do not need to give us any personal information to do so.
Appropriate training: we have training sessions, video's and other material we provide to this end.
Relying on secure identification: we use hashing and secure algorithms to check integrity of digital files and signatures.

* 1.4. What measures did you take to support gender equality in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament? Please elaborate.

The Dutch government supports gender equality in general. However there aren't specific measures taken to support gender equality because this is a task for the political parties. The political parties have to decide by themselves what kind of measures they would like to take to support gender equality.

* 1.5. Do you encourage gender balance in the governing bodies of electoral management bodies?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

1.5.1. If so, please explain how.

The government is committed to increasing the share of women in public administration.
The cabinet supports the creation of networks, which contribute to improving diversity and inclusion in politics and public administration in the Netherlands.

* 1.6. How do you monitor, support and evaluate progress on gender equality in electoral processes? Please elaborate.

We didn't implement any specific measures to support gender equality, so there wasn't monitoring, support or evaluation needed.

* 1.7. Are you aware of any assessment/reports/information gathered at national level by relevant civil society organisations in relation to inclusion in elections?

Yes, the organization Ieder(in) gathers information on the accessibility of election and makes a report after each election. The last report that Ieder(in) published is uploaded.

Also the Stichting Prokkel gives information about how many municipalities engaged persons with an intellectual disability for polling station work. See: https://www.prokkel.nl/inclusieve-stembureaus/
And every election the organization Open State Foundation gives information about the accessibility of polling stations on this website: https://waarismijnstemlokaal.nl/

Please upload your file(s)

* 1.8. Could you describe the electoral rights of persons with a disability in your Member State?

Persons with a disability of 18 years and older are eligible to vote, just like everyone else. Persons with a physical impairment may take someone of choice into the polling booth to assist them with voting. All other voters can ask for assistance outside of the voting booth.

* 1.9. Did you take specific measures to support the electoral participation of persons with disabilities as voters in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

1.9.1. If so, could you describe them?

In the months before the election, we provided communication materials to interest groups and municipalities (In the Netherlands, municipalities are responsible for communicating towards their citizens). These materials were focussed on a wide spectrum of accessibility: physical mobility, hearing and visual impairment, low literacy, (slight) mental disability, dementia, but also first-time voters and young voters. In our national campaign we also made sure to include these groups, for example by creating separate campaign materials and strategies towards young people. We organized a webinar and a workshop on accessible elections for civil servants involved in organizing elections. Voting documents were made accessible for persons with visual impairments and persons who have a low literacy. Checklists and information on how to organize accessible elections were sent to those involved in the organization of elections. All these measures were taken in close cooperation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. Also subsidies were provided for initiatives to improve the accessibility of elections. For example subsidy to provide accessible information about which facilities can be found in polling stations to make voting more accessible for persons with disabilities (waarismijnstemlokaal.nl), subsidy to organize livestreams for deaf persons with information on the European Parliament election and subsidy to help municipalities recruit persons with intellectual disabilities as a polling officer and support them doing this work.

* 1.10. Did you take specific measures to support the electoral participation of persons with disabilities as candidates in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- ( ) Yes
- (●) No

* 1.11. Did you take specific measures to support the participation of persons with disabilities as election officials in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

1.11.1. If so, could you describe them?

The Ministry of the Interior gave subsidy to the organization Stichting Prokkel to help make it possible that municipalities recruited persons with intellectual disabilities to help with the work in polling stations. During the elections to the European Parliament 220 municipalities took part of the campaign Inclusive Polling Stations of the Stichting Prokkel and 350 persons with an intellectual disability worked at polling stations supported by persons without a disability.

* 1.12. Did you make use of the guide of good electoral practices in addressing the participation of citizens with disabilities in the electoral process, prepared by the Commission and Member States in the framework of the European Cooperation Network on Elections?

- ( ) Yes
- (●) No

* 1.12.1. Did you take any of the following measures before or during the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [x] Develop disability action plans, including checklists for accessible elections and involve representative organisations of persons with disabilities in the preparation of such plans.
- [x] Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to electoral information, in multiple and accessible modes and formats.
- [x] Ensure that election authorities' websites are accessible.
- [x] Conduct awareness-raising activities, training and education activities, including in cooperation with representative organisations of persons with disabilities.
- [x] Choose polling station premises that are accessible, including by using checklists developed together with representative organisations of persons with disabilities.
- [x] Design ballot papers to be easy to read and use assistive tools.
- [x] Design accessible polling stations, going beyond physical accessibility.
- [ ] Ensure that voting machines are equipped with software that can easily incorporate accessibility features.
- [x] Design voting booths and ballot boxes that are accessible to a wide range of voters.
- [x] Purchase tools to improve accessibility, such as magnifying glasses, lamps, tactile and/or Braille templates for paper-based ballots, tactile stickers for ballot boxes, large grip pens, large printouts, audio files (i.e., DAISY (95)), video files with full transcription, captioning, sign language interpretation.
- [x] Provide complementary voting methods and other specific arrangements, including postal and online voting, advance voting, mobile voting, curb-side voting, proxy voting and the option to choose another polling station. Mainstream disability considerations in manuals for election officials.
- [x] Consult representative organisations of persons with disabilities when preparing election rules and involve them in developing codes of conduct, including inclusive practices for compiling candidate lists.

1.12.2. Did you take any of the following measures during the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [x] Raise awareness among electoral and other relevant authorities.
- [x] Disseminate electoral information in multiple and accessible modes and formats.
- [ ] Make electoral debates and events accessible.
- [ ] Support accessibility of political advertising, including in cooperation with representative organisations of persons with disabilities and providing training to media providers.
- [ ]

Support candidates with disabilities, including by providing sign language interpreters, and conduct debates in accessible formats.

- [x] Help persons with disabilities to participate as election officials, including by providing access to sign language interpretation.
- [x] Support participation of voters, including by providing voting assistance by a person of their choice and implementing queue jumping policies.
- [x] Announce election results in accessible formats.
- [x] Ensure that election dispute resolution procedures are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- [x] Support observation of elections by persons with disabilities and observe the accessibility of elections.

1.12.3. Did you take any of the following measures after the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [x] Collect data on the participation of persons with disabilities in elections.
- [x] Evaluate the accessibility of elections and involve representative organisations of persons with disabilities in such evaluation.
- [x] Review legal, institutional, and administrative barriers.
- [ ] Review the accessibility of electoral websites, including in cooperation with representative organisations of persons with disabilities.
- [x] Publish the results of the evaluation in accessible formats.
- [ ] Simplify, automate and provide access to the various preregistration processes, including voter registration, how to request accommodation, and give persons with disabilities access to the documents they need.
- [x] Reinforce partnerships between election authorities, representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders, to address identified gaps related to the overall accessibility of the electoral environment.

* 1.12.4. Briefly elaborate on the measures taken before, during or after the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

Municipalities are responsible for the organization of elections, such as choosing and designing polling stations and purchasing tools to improve accessibility. When choosing polling stations they do not only take into account the accessibility, but also if there are enough polling stations in the vicinity of voters. Voters themselves can choose a polling station of their liking, within their municipality. Municipalities are responsible for having accessible websites, as Dutch law requires that all government websites are accessible. The Ministry of the Interior supports municipalities with organizing (accessible) elections. In the Netherlands there are no voting machines. The government does not organize electoral debates and events. It also does not take part in political advertising, nor does it provide training to media providers. However, together with representative organizations of persons with disabilities and low literacy the Ministry of the Interior has made guidelines for accessible communication and events of political parties. Everyone is allowed to observe the process of voting in polling stations, also persons with disabilities, as long as they don't interfere with the voting process. Elections observers observed the accessibility of European Parliament elections. The Ministry of the Interior commissioned a research to investigate the accessibility of polling stations on the day of the election for the European Parliament. The Ministry of the Interior is in the process of renewing the Action plan for accessible voting. This is done in close cooperation with representative organizations of persons with disabilities and low literacy. The Ministry has also commissioned a baseline study of the accessibility of elections.

* 1.13. Did you take specific measures to support turnout of different groups of citizens based on their specific needs?

- (•) Yes
- ( ) No

1.13.1. If so, could you describe them?

We included different groups of citizens in our national campaign, such as different age groups, different cultural backgrounds and different (dis)abilities. We also made several campaign materials specifically targeted at young people and first-time voters. We also provided information for different groups (e.g. low-literate people, people with physical/visual/auditory disabilities) through municipalities and interest groups.

* 1.14. Are you aware of citizens from your country having specific difficulties to take part in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament (e.g., difficulties linked to identification documents)?

- ○ Yes
- ◉ No

1.14.1. Did you take specific measures in this context?

Not applicable

2. Encouraging election integrity and fair campaigning

* 2.1. Are you aware of pledges and codes of conducts in your Member State by political parties and campaign organisations on election integrity and fair campaigning in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament? Please elaborate.

The Netherlands is not aware of any general pledge or code of conduct on election integrity and fair campaigning in the context of the 2024 elections. This does not foreclude the possibility that individual political parties or coalitions of political parties established their own code of conduct.

Please upload your file(s)

3. Promoting election observation

* 3.1. Did you take specific measures to facilitate the observation of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament by citizens and/or international organisations in your Member State?

- ◉ Yes
- ○ No

3.1.1. If so, could you provide examples?

Dutch citizens/individuals do not need accreditation to observe election in the Netherlands, for example polling stations are open voor everyone. This rule is communicated, for example in an instruction for polling

station staff. International organizations can apply for an accreditation to observe elections in the Netherlands. During the EU-election in June 2024, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has facilitated for example OSCE-ODIHR and election-watch.EU to set up meetings for them on their request.

* 3.2. Did you organise or support training activities for election observers ahead of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- ○ Yes
- ◉ No

* 3.2.1. If so, what were the main topics covered by those training activities?

- ☐ participation in electoral processes of different groups
- ☐ election malpractice and fraud, including online
- ☐ the detection of covert and unlawful influence, including from third countries
- ☐ information manipulation, interference and disinformation
- ☑ other

3.2.1.1. If other, please indicate.

not applicable (previous question is answered no)

* 3.3. Did you cooperate, through your national election networks or other, with organisations of election observers?

- ☐ to raise awareness on the importance of scrutinising election processes
- ☐ to develop policies furthering the integrity, resilience, and democratic nature of elections
- ☐ to understand how new technologies can be used to engage in information manipulation, interference and the spread of disinformation to the detriment of free and fair elections
- ☑ did not cooperate with organisations of election observers
- ☐ other

3.3.2. If you cooperated with organisations of election observers, please briefly comment on such experience.

4. Protecting election-related infrastructure and ensuring resilience against cyber and other hybrid threats

* 4.1. What measures did you take to ensure the protection of physical election-related infrastructure in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament (for instance, planning for contingencies that could have significant disruptive effects on the smooth running of elections)? Please elaborate your reply.

- Election Table. The Election Table consist of relevant parties like municipalities, the Electoral Council, the Ministry of the Interior and partners in the safety domain of the government. These organisations came together in a national electoral network called the Election Table. Physical and digital threats and risks were included in the scope of the Election Table meetings.
The election table came together in several meetings. One of these meetings was a round table session to discuss different plausible scenarios relating to the election and the required actions, should these scenarios happen.

- Goals of the Election Table were: (1) sharing information which could be relevant including information about possible risks and threats and measures to be taken (2) discuss possible risks and threats and measures related to the democratic process (3) taking reactive measures when necessary.

- The Ministry of the Interior has organized a webinar for civil servants of municipalities (+- 6 weeks before Election Day). The goal was to inform municipalities about possible safety risks during the elections of the European Parliament, including risks regarding the physical election-related infrastructure, for example violence in polling stations.

- Municipalities are asked to do a risk assessment themselves to be prepared for possible threats in the organization of the election process.

- The National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security organized briefings for political parties regarding the physical and digital safety of candidates.

- Two weeks prior and after the election incident management procedures are in place to assess and decide on necessary actions when incidents are detected or reported to the Electoral Council or the Ministry of the Interior.

- The Ministry of the Interior has an sms-service to inform all project managers in the municipalities at the same time during the election on necessary information if necessary.

- Voting is done on paper. We only use software to tally the votes afterwards. This software is made to be used on an air gapped LAN network with no access to the internet. Software is extensively tested beforehand and the reports of the security testing and the legal compliance testing are made public before the election day.

* 4.2. Have you identified the entities operating election-related infrastructure that are critical for the organisation and conduct of elections?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

4.2.1. If so, please list those entities.

- Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
- Electoral Council
- Municipalities
- Association of Dutch Municipalities
- Postal delivery services
- Printing services
- Polling stations

* 4.2.2. Please describe measures taken to enhance the resilience of those entities and help them address the risks inherent in their operations.

See measures written down at question 4.1

* 4.3. Did you carry out or update risk assessments regarding the resilience of election-related infrastructure and of entities operating it ahead of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

4.3.1. If so, please provide a non-confidential summary of your findings.

The National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security and the Electoral Council provided a confidential risk assessments regarding the threats of election-related infrastructure. In general, the conclusion in their report was that there were no concrete threats identified in the run up to elections to the European Parliament. Although there were imaginable threats that could harm the election process.

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* 4.4. What measures did you take to ensure a high level of cybersecurity in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [x] include an election cybersecurity taskforce or the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing & Analysis Centre in the national electoral network
- [x] increase awareness on cyber hygiene of political parties, candidates, election officials and other entities related to elections
- [x] perform cybersecurity risk assessments
- [x] test crisis management and contingency plans
- [x] provide adequate training to relevant stakeholders involved in those cyber exercises
- [x] offer support and advice to the election stakeholders, including campaign organisations, parties and politicians (e.g., offer guidance on protection measures)
- [ ] cooperate with private entities involved in the cybersecurity of elections
- [ ] other

* 4.4.1. Please provide details.

- In run up to the elections, partners in the safety domain of the government came together in a national electoral network, this is the Election Table. Physical and digital threats and risks were included in the scope of the Election Table. For more information, please consult the answer on question 4.1.
- The Ministry has organized a webinar for civil servants of municipalities, this webinar was about physical, cyber and hybrid threats.
- The National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security has organized a meeting with political parties to increase awareness on cyber hygiene.
- A cybersecurity risk assessment was involved in the risk assessments (question 4.3.1.)
- Two weeks prior and after the election incident management procedures are in place to assess and

decide on necessary actions when incidents are detected or reported to the Electoral Council or the Ministry of the Interior. The functioning of the incident management procedures including the sms-service to the project managers in municipalities was tested in advance.

5. Protecting election-related information

* 5.1. Please briefly describe the specific measures taken in your Member State to protect the information environment around the 2024 elections to the European Parliament including to ensure that voters receive correct information in a timely and intelligible manner.

The Ministry of the Interior offered correct information about the electoral process through their communication channels. This happened in different ways so that it is accessible and understandable for everyone. For example, through infographics and videos. We also created content for municipalities to share on their communication channels. If citizens know how the election process works, they are less susceptible to manipulative or false information on the subject.

The Dutch government only debunks disinformation (through its own communication channels) around election topics, when the information is false and can influence the election process. For example, when messages are circulating with false information about how to vote.

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations analyses early media reports or fact checkers' reports on possible dis- or misinformation about the electoral process, in order to respond to dis- or misinformation about the electoral process.

In exceptional cases, the Ministry of the Interior can use its trusted flagger status, which means that their reports on the relevant social media platforms are treated with priority. The ministry deploys this status very cautiously and only when disinformation might damage the integrity of the electoral process.

* 5.2. Did you support projects, including from civil society, media organisations, research and education institutes and academia, to support resilience and public awareness, media literacy and critical thinking to address information manipulation, interference and disinformation related to the 2024 elections to the European Parliament or otherwise affecting free, fair and resilient elections? If so, please describe them.

It is not the government's prime role to constantly address misleading or inaccurate information. That is up to the media and fact checkers. We do however want to support independent organisations that work on public awareness, media literacy and critical thinking. Therefore, the Ministry of the Interior subsidises the website www.isdatechtzo.nl. A website focused on strengthening citizens resilience against disinformation.

* 5.3. Did you provide specific support for independent media and fact-checking organisations in their activities addressing information manipulation and disinformation during the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

5.3.1. If so, please explain what kind of support you provided and to what type of organisations.

Given the important role of factcheckers in their activities addressing information manipulation and disinformation, the Dutch government sudsidises the factcheckers consortium BENEDMO. Together with BENEDMO, the Ministry of Interior is researching how to better support factcheckers, without compromising their independent position.

We do not work together with traditional media outlets and do not support them in their activities addressing information manipulation and disinformation. This is a deliberate choice to ensure the independent nature of the media outlets.

* 5.4. Did you take specific measures to support or facilitate the transmission of swift messages and responses to protect the information environment around the 2024 elections to the European Parliament (such as messages pre-bunking or debunking information manipulation and disinformation about election procedures)?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

5.4.1. If so, please provide examples of such measures.

The Ministry of the Interior offered correct information about the electoral process through their communication channels in order to prebunk false information about the electoral process.

During these elections, we did not see specific messages that we debunked through our own communication channels.

In exceptional cases, the Ministry of the Interior can use its trusted flagger status, which means that their reports on the relevant social media platforms are treated with priority. The ministry deploys this status very cautiously and only when disinformation might damage the integrity of the electoral process. During these elections, we used the status once for X, for a general warning that false messages about electoral process might appear on their platform and that caution is necessary.

* 5.5. Did you develop training for election or other relevant authorities to protect the information environment around the 2024 elections to the European Parliament and ensure preparedness to detect, pre-bunk and debunk disinformation about elections?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

5.5.1. If so, please elaborate.

Before each election, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior holds a webinar for municipal public officials in order to prepare them for disruptions of the elections. During these webinars we discuss situations such as demonstrations and disruptions near voting stations, but also what public officials can do when they come across disinformation about the election process.

We also organised election tables in which representatives of ministries, the Dutch Electoral Council, municipalities and relevant partners from the security domain exchange information about possible threats and how to deal with them. Disinformation was also a topic.

* 5.6. In this regard, did you make use of tools such as the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference toolbox to discuss appropriate responses and support the quick exchange of information, including in the framework of the Rapid Alert System?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

5.6.1. If so, please elaborate.

We worked mostly on situational awareness tools, such as common framework and methodology and information sharing. During the webinar for municipal public officials we discussed when (and when not) to respond to disinformation and how to do that appropriately. During the election tables we discussed possible situations and created a strategy for when it would happen. In this strategy we defined the role of each actor in the election table.

We also participated in the RAS meetings prior to the elections.

* 5.7. Please share any best practices for identifying, mitigating, and managing information manipulation, interference and disinformation risks in electoral processes that you had in place for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

The electoral process in the Netherlands is robust and public confidence that elections are fair is high. Nevertheless, we must be vigilant to ensure that the electoral process, now and in the future, is uninterrupted. To mitigate risks, the government is taking some measures, which are already described above:

- We organise election tables in which representatives of ministries, the Dutch Electoral Council, municipalities and relevant partners from the security domain exchange information about possible threats and how to deal with them. Since these elections the digital services coordinator also took part of the election table.
- We organise a webinar for municipal public officials in order to prepare them for disruptions of the elections.
- We communicate properly about the elections process through our own communication channels.
- In exceptional cases, the Ministry of the Interior can use its trusted flagger status, which means that their reports on the relevant social media platforms are treated with priority. The ministry deploys this status very cautiously and only when disinformation might damage the integrity of the electoral process.
- On an international level, the Dutch government takes part of the Rapid Alert System (RAS) and the European Cooperation Network on Elections (ECNE) to share information and best practices.

6. Measures regarding funding from third countries of political parties, political foundations, electoral campaigns and candidates

* 6.1. Did you recently modify your rules related to donations and other funding to political parties, political foundations, political candidates and campaign organisations from third countries or are you planning to do so?

- ( ) Yes
- (●) No

7. Promoting easy access to exercise electoral rights for elections to the European Parliament

* 7.1. Did you promote initiatives aiming at increasing election accessibility and political engagement in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [ ] awareness-raising initiatives
- [x] information campaigns
- [ ] conferences
- [ ] debates
- [x] other
- [ ] none

7.1.1. If so, please elaborate, including on the timing of such initiatives.

In the months before the election, we provided communication materials to interest groups and municipalities (In the Netherlands, municipalities are responsible for communicating towards their citizens). These materials were focussed on a wide spectrum of accessibility: physical mobility, hearing and visual impairment, low literacy, (slight) mental disability, dementia, but also first-time voters and young voters. In our national campaign we also made sure to include these groups, for example by creating separate campaign materials and strategies towards young people. We organized a webinar and a workshop on accessible elections for civil servants involved in organizing elections. Voting documents were made accessible for persons with visual impairments and persons who have a low literacy. Checklists and information on how to organize accessible elections were sent to those involved in the organization of elections. All these measures were taken in close cooperation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. Also subsidies were provided for initiatives to improve the accessibility of elections. For example subsidy to provide accessible information about which facilities can be found in polling stations to make voting more accessible for persons with disabilities (waarismijnstemlokaal.nl), subsidy to organize livestreams for deaf persons with information on the European Parliament election and subsidy to help city councils recruit persons with intellectual disabilities as a polling officer and support them doing this work.

* 7.1.2. Please also explain whether you placed a special focus on certain groups:

- [x] young people
- [x] first-time voters
- [x] older people
- [ ] minorities
- [x] other

7.1.2.1. If other, please explain.

people with physical or mental disabilities

* 7.1.3. Did you make use of the Commission's Guide to EU citizenship?

no

* 7.2. During which days and voting hours could people vote in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament in your Member State? Were there any differences with the voting hours and days during the previous elections to the European Parliament in 2019? If so, please explain those differences and the reasons for the change.

In the Netherlands it was possible to vote on the 6th of June from 7:30 till 21:00. Voters from abroad voted by mail. Their vote had to be received at 15:00 on the 6th of June. These rules were the same as in 2019.

* 7.3. Did you conduct targeted information campaigns to increase mobile Union citizens awareness of their electoral rights and obligations, both as voters and candidates in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

* 7.4. Please elaborate on how you ensured that mobile Union citizens could easily access information about the progress and status of their registration.

Voters need to register to vote with their municipality. Municipalities are legally obliged to inform voters about their request to be registered, within 7 days. When voters are registered, they automatically receive a voting pass from their municipality, no later than 2 weeks before the election. Voters can always inquire about the status of their registration, with their municipality.

* 7.5. Where local authorities are competent to enter mobile Union citizens on the electoral rolls, what steps did you take to support those authorities in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

Municipalities register mobile EU citizens that want to vote in the Netherlands. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands has made a form available for this registration (the Y 32 form) and informed municipalities on multiple occasions and through different information channels on the registration process. The Ministry advised municipalities to actively inform their mobile EU citizens and made an accompanying letter and translation of the form available, in Dutch, English, German, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish. In addition, a flyer and web text examples were made for this target group. All information was shared with municipalities and publicly available on the government website.

* 7.6. Did you take measures to inform your citizens living in third countries on how and where they could exercise their right to vote in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

7.6.1. If so, please explain those measures.

There is a website with information on the procedures for registration and voting for Dutch citizens living abroad.

* 7.7. Which language selection did you use for explaining the electoral process to voters in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

Information about the electoral process was available in Dutch and English. General information was also made available in Frisian and Papiamento.
Information about the registration as voter for mobile EU citizens was also made available in German, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish, to be used by municipalities in informing their mobile EU citizens.

* 7.8. Are you aware of citizens from your country having difficulties with registration formalities when seeking to vote and stand in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament in other Member States, and if so, can you provide examples?

No

* 7.9. Did mobile Union citizens (voters and candidates) encounter specific difficulties with the registration process in your country? Please present data disaggregated by sex and disability. If such data is not available, please indicate this in comment.

No

Please upload your file(s)

* 7.10. What feedback (e.g., public consultation, user satisfaction surveys) have you sought and received from citizens, associations or non-governmental organisations in connection to the information and registration process of mobile EU citizens and what lessons do you draw from this feedback?

Some Dutch citizens that were registered to vote in their EU member state wanted to vote for the Dutch candidates for the European Parliament. The municipality of The Hague, which is responsible for the registration of mobile EU citizens, received many telephone calls and emails from citizens that were delisted because they were already registered in their EU member state of residence. Five Dutch citizens objected to the decision to delist them from the votersregister to vote for the Dutch candidates for the European Parliament. They objected to this decision at the Council of State. Ultimately, none of the five cases led to a court decision. The municipality of The Hague and the Ministry of the Interior will evaluate the data exchange and the information and communication to voters.

8. Enhancing the European nature of the elections to the European parliament

* 8.1. How much time ahead of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament was the announcement of candidates and the start of campaigning possible in your Member State?

- (●) Less than 3 months
- ( ) Between 3 and 6 months
- ( ) Between 6 and 9 months
- ( ) More than 9 months

* 8.2. Did you encourage or facilitate the provision of information to the public on the affiliation between national political parties and European political parties before and during the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- ○ Yes
- ◉ No

* 8.2.2. Did you indicate such an affiliation on the ballots?

- ○ Yes
- ◉ No

* 8.2.3. Did relevant competent authorities provide such information otherwise?

- ○ Yes
- ◉ No

* 8.3. Did you take measures, if any, to facilitate the conduct of cross-border campaigns by actors at Union level (such as European political parties) or multi-national political parties in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

The Netherlands has not taken any measures to facilitate the conduct of cross-border campaigns by actors at the Union level.

9. Addressing the risk of multiple voting in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament

* 9.1. How did you inform mobile Union citizens on the rules and sanctions related to multiple voting ahead of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

When mobile EU-citizens register to vote for the EP elections, they declare (on the Y 32 form) that they are not voting in the European Parliament election in another member state. The forementioned information that was made available for municipalities, to inform their mobile EU citizens about the registration process, and the information on the government website also clearly mentioned the rules and sanctions on multiple voting.

* 9.2. Where, in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, a citizen of your Member State was removed from your electoral roll in order to vote in another Member State, what measures did you take to avoid that such a removal affected the registration of that citizen in electoral rolls for national elections? Please elaborate.

Dutch citizens living outside the Netherlands can register as voter abroad for different kind of elections. This is a central registration (or electoral roll) and separate per election. So voters were removed centrally and only for the EP election. In this way, the removal could not affect their registration for other elections.

10. Strengthening election networks, electoral cooperation and reporting

* 10.1. Please briefly explain how your national election network (or election authority) cooperated in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament and the implementation of the Commission's recommendation on inclusive and resilient electoral processes in the Union and enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament.

The Dutch Electoral Council was in close contact with municipalities to ensure the quality of the elections. Apart from the development and revision of instructions and factsheets in advance, various ways have been set up to instruct and redirect such as large-scale offline and online meetings regarding a new procedure for the process of (re)counting votes. At a more accessible level, on line walk-in consultation hours are organised in the run-up to each election, during which municipalities can ask any questions they may have. Municipalities were also regularly guided through the process of organising elections through a newsletter from the Ministry, for which the Electoral Council provides input. This newsletter contained directions, instructions and friendly reminders to ensure that municipalities are aware of the latest information and know what is expected of them. During the process of determination of the results, this contact was approached in an even closer and professional manner through a separate system in which municipalities were informed about and asked to act upon possible mistakes in counting.

* 10.2. Did your national election network or election authority engage with other stakeholders in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament?

- [ ] media platforms
- [x] researchers
- [ ] academia
- [x] election observers
- [ ] human rights defenders
- [x] Digital Services Coordinators
- [ ] other

10.2.1. If so, please elaborate.

The Dutch Electoral Council carries out different evaluation studies, such as questionnaires, focus groups and the data-analysis on various topics. No election observers were appointed during this election.

Via de election table (see Q&A 4.1) the digital services coordinator in the Netherlands was engaged in preparation of the election.

Election observers (OSCE - ODIHR and ElectionWatch.EU) received accreditation to observe the election.

* 10.3. Did your national elections network or election authority liaise with national Parliaments? Please elaborate.

On a regular basis, the Dutch Electoral Council meets with the committee clerk of the Credentials committee of the national Parliament. During these meetings, the process of and updates on the determination of results and appointment of members are discussed. This close contact strengthens the transparency of and trust in the elections, contributing to a fair and thorough assessment by the committee of the electoral process.

* 10.4. Did you take any steps to promote or increase cooperation within your national election network in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament? Please elaborate.

Cooperation within the national election network takes two forms. Firstly, close contacts between different partners are essential to take the quality of the electoral process to a higher level. Mutual learning is promoted by participating in and organising events, as well as sharing best practices. Secondly, the Dutch Electoral Council aimed to increase cooperation by low-threshold contact with different partners (municipalities, suppliers, political parties etc.) and involving these partners in the tasks, instructions and support as given by the Electoral Council with the aim of improving the quality of the electoral process.

* 10.5. Have you increased resources and means for your national election network to conduct their activities recently or in the context of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament? Please elaborate.

No

PART 2 – Participation and the rights of EU citizens

1. Entry in the electoral roll and Turnout

The following section aims to gather quantitative and qualitative data on voters in Member States.

National citizens

1.1. For each of the following lines, please provide as much as possible the total number, as well as data disaggregated by age (under 25, 25-39, 40-54, 55+), sex, and whether a person has a disability. If any disaggregated data is not available, please indicate it.

* 1.1.1. Number of own nationals residing in your country that entered in the electoral roll in your country to vote in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

13.452.006 eligible voters.

* 1.1.2. Number of own nationals residing in your country who voted in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

6.141.841 voters in the Netherlands

* 1.1.3. Number of own nationals residing in other Member States that entered in the electoral roll of your country to vote in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

70.127 Dutch citizens who reside in other Member States were registered to vote for the elections.

* 1.1.4. Number of own nationals residing in other Member States who voted in your country (i.e., voted for candidates in their country of nationality).

44.388 Dutch citizens who live abroad voted in de 2024 elections to the European Parliament. It’s not known which percentage of these voters live in another member state of the European Union.

Please upload your file(s)

68141436-6632-41b0-9adb-49cc03f1ab7a/Kopie_van_Number_of_Dutch_cititzens_registered_to_vote_in_other_MS_breakdown_by_MS__3.2_.xlsx

Mobile EU citizens

1.2. For each of the following lines, please provide the total number, as well as data disaggregated by age (under 25, 25-39, 40-54, 55+), sex, and whether a person has a disability. If any disaggregated data is not available, please indicate it.

* 1.2.1. Number of non-national EU citizens in voting age residing in your country at the time of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, broken down by Member State of nationality.

For the time of the EP election, data is not available. Data is only available for January 1, 2024. Total number of non-national EU citizens in voting age (18 or older) for that date was 648.622.

* 1.2.2. Number of non-national EU citizens that entered in the electoral roll in your country to vote in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, broken down by Member State of nationality.

A total number of 67.766 non-national EU citizens were registered in the electoral roll to vote in the 2024 EP elections in the Netherlands. A file with the breakdown by MS is uploaded.

* 1.2.3. Number of non-national EU citizens that entered in the electoral rolls in your country and voted in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, broken down by Member State of nationality.

Data not available. Whether someone voted or not, is not being registered.

Please upload your file(s)

13daf694-0676-4eaf-b325-2ba1e103e9e5/Bevolking__geslacht__leeftijd_en_nationaliteit_op_1_januari_21082024_151046__1.2.1._.csv
767d6b16-82d4-4172-a4a1-94d9f48c2257/Kopie_van_Number_of_non-national_EU_citizens_registered_to_vote_in_NL_-_breakdown_by_MS__1.2.2._.xlsx

* 1.3. Have you analysed patterns related to protected characteristics in voters' turn out/participation in the election and/or in running candidates, to uncover if such groups are participating in the election to the same or to varying degrees? If such patterns in participation were detected, could this inform future policymaking?

No

2. Right to stand as a candidate

2.1. For each of the following lines, please provide the total number, as well as data disaggregated by age (under 25, 25-39, 40-54, 55+), sex, nationality and whether a person has a disability. If any disaggregated data is not available, please indicate it.

* 2.1.1. Number of your own nationals that stood as candidates on the lists for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament in your country.

A total of 493 candidates were of Dutch nationality. Age is not tracked. Gender is only kept up to the extent that a political group/candidate has it included on the list of candidates on its own initiative; there is no obligation to do so under current Electoral Law and regulations (the data, where available, are shown below). Disability is not tracked.

Total number of candidates: 493
Candidates with explicitly stated gender female: 87 (~17.65 %)
Candidates with explicitly stated gender male: 187 (~37.93 %)
Candidates without explicitly stated gender: 219 (~44.42 %)

* 2.1.2. Number of your own nationals that are part of minority groups (e.g. Roma) and stood as candidates on the lists for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament in your country.

unknown

* 2.1.3. Number of non-national EU citizens that stood as candidates on the lists for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament in your country.

4

* 2.1.4. Number of non-national EU citizens elected from the lists of candidates for the 2024 elections to the European Parliament in your country.

1

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* 2.2. Were any applications from nationals of other Member States to stand as a candidate in the 2024 elections to the European Parliament refused by your electoral authorities? If so, how many, from which nationality and what were the reasons?

No

Directive 2013/1/EU amended Directive 93/109/EC to facilitate the process for non-national Member State citizens to register their intention to stand as candidates for European elections in their Member State of residence, and support the efficient communication among national authorities to ensure that citizens who

have been deprived of the right to stand for such elections in their Member States of nationality are not registered as candidates in their Member State of residence, and that citizens are not registered as candidates in both their Member State of nationality and residence. In this regard:

* 2.3. Were there cases where your relevant national authorities did not receive replies from the authorities of the state of nationality with respect to this exchange of information? Do you have any further comments regarding this communication process?

No

* 2.4. Member State experts at the Commission's expert group on electoral matters prepared an optional form to support the transmission of information regarding non-national EU citizens applying to stand as candidates in their Member State of residence foreseen by Directive 93/109/EC. Did your national authorities make use of this form? Do you have any further comments regarding this form?

No

3. Information exchange system (Article 13 of Directive 93/109/EC)

Directive 93/109/EC foresees an exchange of information on non-national EU citizens registered to vote or stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament and intending to exercise their right to vote in their state of residence to help prevent citizens from voting twice. Member States have designated national contact points to conduct this exchange, and the Commission has facilitated the development of the process in its expert group on electoral matters, as well as provided a digital tool to ensure that the exchange of such data is secure.

* 3.1. How many non-national EU citizens (voters and candidates) did your authorities notify to their counterpart authorities through this process (please provide breakdown by Member State of nationality and for voters and candidates)? When did you begin and end sending data in this process?

Candidates:
Information was requested for 4 candidates of foreign nationality who were registered as candidates within the Netherlands (1 Germany, 1 Portugal, 1 France, 1 Belgium). All requests for information were sent on May 13th.
None of the candidates were removed, all were eligible as candidates.

Voters:
A total number of 67.766 non-national EU citizens were registered in the electoral roll to vote in the 2024 EP elections in the Netherlands. The first round of data was sent on April 24th (six weeks before the election). The second and final round of data was sent on May 14th (after the registration in the Netherlands was closed).

* 3.2. For how many citizens of your Member State did you receive registration information from your counterpart authorities (please provide breakdown by Member State of residence and for voters and candidates), and among those notified, how many were removed from your national electoral rolls? When did you start and stop receiving data in this process?

Candidates:
Information was requested for 14 candidates (1 Sweden, 1 Bulgaria, 11 Belgium, 1 Ireland) of Dutch nationality who were registered as candidates within another Member State. The first request for information was received on April 18th, the last request for information was received on May 21st.
All but two candidates for which information was requested could be found in the relevant registries. None of the candidates found in the registries were marked as non-eligible to be candidates.

Voters:
The information of 70.127 Dutch voters registered in other MS was received. The first information was received on April 3rd.
The last information was received on June 4th.

Removed:
7.956 voters were removed from our national electoral roll.

Regarding the use of the crypto-tool:

* 3.3. Please provide your reflections on national experience with this data exchange process and the use of the tools provided by the Commission. Please consider in particular the following aspects: the type of data exchanged (compliance with the compulsory and optional data items and your reflections on how this could be improved), the XML file schema, the S-CIRCABC mediated process (the use of the secure national folders in the exchange of files), the encryption tool (usability and suitability), and the national single contact points.

Overall the process worked well for the Netherlands, both in sending and receiving the data of voters (around 140.000 in total). The exchange platform, encryption tool and XML file schema made for a well organized and secure process. With the national single contact points it was easy to connect with other Member States regarding the data exchange. Address and place in Member State of nationality were added to the Dutch registry to be compliant with the required data. Although the uniformity of the data was improved, there are still differences in data registration and process between Member States. Particularly the differences in registration deadlines and moment of transmission of data are difficult. For the Netherlands this means that not all received data can be processed.

This is because by law, the Register of Invalid Voting Passes has to be established no later than 8 days before the election day. Voters abroad already received their voting pass and ballot paper at this time. So if information is received from another MS that a voter has to be removed from the Dutch registry, the voting pass of this person will be added to the Register of Invalid Voting Passes. This way, their vote will not be counted. After the establishment of this register, it is not possible to change the eligibility of voters anymore. On top of that, a few days of processing time are needed, prior to the establishment of the register. This makes that the data from some MS was received at a time that it was no longer possible to process it.

* 3.4. **General comments:** How well do you think the information exchange system operated, in particular compared with the 2019 elections to the European Parliament? Do you have comments on the information exchange process and on its further improvement?

See answer on 3.3. In general, the exchange process works well and more uniform than in 2019. The data of many voters has been exchanged. But the differences in registration deadlines and moment of transmission of data between Member States are difficult. For the Netherlands this means that not all received data can be processed.

4. Elections reports

Have you prepared a national report on the conduct of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament? If so, please kindly attach it to your reply to this questionnaire.

PART 3 – Other remarks

Please add remarks/topics/issues/questions you would like to bring to the attention of the Commission, and which have not been addressed elsewhere in this questionnaire, in the context of the conduct of the 2024 European Parliament elections.

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