



NUS-USI 2009 European Elections fact sheet and frequently asked questions

1. When are the next European elections?

Polling day in NI is on Thursday 4 June 2009. Elections to the European Parliament will be held in the 27 member states of the European Union (EU) between 4 and 7 June 2009. The actual polling days vary from country to country according to local custom.

2. What are the member states of the European Union?

Austria	Germany	Netherlands
Belgium	Greece	Poland
Bulgaria	Hungary	Portugal
Cyprus	Ireland	Romania
Czech Republic	Italy	Slovakia
Denmark	Latvia	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
Finland	Luxembourg	Sweden
France	Malta	UK

Current candidate countries seeking membership are: Croatia; former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM); Turkey

3. What are we voting on?

More than 700 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) will be elected by proportional representation to represent some 515,000,000 EU citizens, making these the biggest trans-national elections in history. After India, the EU is the largest democratic electorate in the world.

Depending on whether or not the Lisbon Treaty is ratified by then, the actual number of MEPs returned will either be 736 or 751. Every five years, new MEPs are elected to represent each country of the EU in the European Parliament, and MEPs sit according to political allegiance.

4. How many MEPs will there be for NI?

Seats are allocated to countries of the EU according to their population. Three MEPs will represent NI.

5. Who do they represent?

Each MEP represents **everyone** living in their region. So **all three** NI MEPs currently represent you and you can contact any, or all, of them.

6. What is being an MEP like?

Currently, MEPs get the same salary as their national members of parliament – so, in the UK, they get the same pay as MPs. In 2009, however, a new statute will come in giving all MEPs across the EU an equal monthly pay of 7000 euro each, subject to tax.

7. What happened in the last European Elections in 2004?

Seven candidates took part in the last elections on Monday 14 June 2004. The three candidates elected were: Jim Allister (DUP) and Bairbre De Brún (Sinn Féin; SF) who were elected at the first stage, and Jim Nicholson (Ulster Unionist Party; UUP) who was elected at the third stage. Jim Allister got 175,761 first preference votes, Bairbre De Brún 144,541 and Jim Nicholson 91,164. See the voter turnout table below – note how turnout was much higher in NI than UK-wide average:

	Great Britain (%)	Northern Ireland (%)	United Kingdom (%)
2004	38.91	51.72	38.83

8. Who are the candidates for 2009?

- Jim Allister will run again, but not as part of DUP but TUV
- Bairbre de Brún will probably run for SF
- Jim Nicholson will run again as joint UUP/Conservative Party ticket
- The DUP hasn't made an announcement, but it is likely to be Diane Dodds
- The SDLP has announced Alban Maginness will run
- APNI: unknown
- Green Party: unknown
- PUP: unknown

9. What is ahead for the 2009 elections?

Traditionally, the DUP has always gained the most votes in NI European elections. In 2004, Jim Allister, who ran for the DUP at the time, was 30,000 votes ahead of his nearest rival. Jim Allister has now left the DUP over power-sharing with Sinn Fein, and will be running as an independent, for his new party the TUV. So this will make next year's election very interesting, as it will represent the first major vote since power-sharing happened in May 2007.

Sources:

cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/election/re2004.htm | www.europarl.org.uk/guide/Gelectionsmain.html | en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament



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