

EP launches campaign for higher election turnout

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The European Parliament launches a large-scale awareness raising campaign in the 27 EU member states under the slogan "European Elections – It's your choice". The 6th EP elections will take place between 4th and 7th June 2009. Bulgaria and Hungary are the only two countries that still haven't appointed election days.

The campaign will cost the EP EUR 18 million, or 5 eurocents per person – that's calculated on the number of potential voters across the EU," Mihail Hristov of the EP's information office in Bulgaria, says. "To disseminate information, the campaign will rely on mass media, the Internet, post cards, billboards, three-dimensional installations on crucial issues to EU citizens, such as energy, security, transport, borders, food safety, etc. The campaign's posters will carry the official logo – a yellow star against a blue background reminiscent of the EU flag."

In Bulgaria, a choice box with audio-visual equipment, just like the one in Brussels will be installed near the National Palace of Culture in Sofia. Anyone will be able to enter the box, inform themselves on issues related to EU and EP's work and express their opinion. The latter will be processed in all EU languages and alphabets and broadcast in EU's three centers: Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. There will be two additional three-dimensional installations in Sofia displaying provocative images and words. One of the topics will be consumer protection while the other, borders and security.

"In Bulgaria, there will be billboards in 8 more towns," Mihail Hristov explains. "Election trailers will be played in 11 cinema halls. TV and radio clips will be broadcast free of charge by mass media. Postcards and posters will be given away. There will be a special tour "Your first European elections" that will travel to 8 university towns across the country. All these events will take place weeks before the official elections. There will be citizen fora and in 14 towns in Bulgaria the so-called "Europe-direct" centers will be set up. All this is part of the EP's election campaign and will be a supplement to the real campaign of political parties and their candidates. The campaign won't say vote left, right, liberal, centre or others. It just reminds people that on a given date, elections for European Parliament will take place and by participating people vote not only for local but also for European authorities.

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375 million Europeans are eligible voters and will elect 736 MEPs from 27 member states. Bulgaria has 17 seats in the EP.

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