

# Lost Voters: Participation in EU elections and the case for compulsory voting

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## **Some of the recently published by EPIN members: CEPS (Brussels): Lost Voters: Participation in EU elections and the case for compulsory voting by Anthoula Malkopoulou.**

Anthoula Malkopoulou is a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels. She would especially like to thank Mike Beke, Edmond Coughlan, Julia De Clerck-Sachsse, Michael Emerson, Elena Gnedina, Daniel Gros and Piotr Maciej Kaczynski for their useful comments and suggestions, which greatly helped her to improve this paper.

The malaise among Europe's voting citizens with regard to the European Parliament elections casts a shadow over the EU's commitment to political participation and democratic values. Not only do EU elections hold little political relevance next to national electoral cycles, but voters are also lost in the EU's labyrinth of accountability. Yet, what appears as an insurmountable obstacle to the legitimacy of Europe's decision-making mechanisms can be translated into an opportunity for voting system reforms. One way to address the problem of widespread abstention might be to legislate on the obligation to vote. This paper explores compulsory voting systems in a number of developed democracies worldwide and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of introducing such a measure in the EU.

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