



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW

(VENICE COMMISSION)

**ELEMENTS FOR
INFORMATION DOCUMENTS FOR VOTERS**

**Adopted by the Council for Democratic Elections
at its 5th meeting
(Venice, 12 June 2003)
and by the Venice Commission
at its 55th Plenary Session
(Venice, 13-14 June 2003)**

on the basis of a contribution by

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Preliminary remark : this document is a general framework which will be adapted to the individual situation of each State.

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

Votes are a very important moment in a country's democratic life.

They must be conducted in accordance with strict rules; in particular, the following principles must be respected:

- the vote is personal: one may not vote in another person's place (except for special cases provided for in the legislation).
- the vote is secret: no-one must know for whom or for what list you have voted.

This document simply informs you what must be done so that these principles are respected when you vote:

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| 1 – BEFORE POLLING DAY: |
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In order to vote, you must be registered on the electoral roll!

If registration is not automatic: you should follow the instructions given by the authorities for registration.

If registration is automatic:

Once you are registered as resident within a local authority's territory, you should also be registered on this local authority's electoral roll.

Country specifics, e.g.:

- where does registration take place? at the town hall? in another department?
- deadlines for registration and the right of appeal in case the registration did not take place

In case of doubt, you are advised to check with the electoral commission (at the town hall...) a few days (or up to such time allowed by law) before the election date:

- that your name is definitely on the electoral roll
- that the other information is correct: (date of birth, address ...)
- which polling station you should vote in (premises, address)
- the polling station's opening hours
- if necessary, the arrangements for alternative forms of voting (such as postal ballot)

If your name is not on the electoral roll, ask that this be corrected: find out about the procedures to be followed and the documents to be provided.

For people who are ill or unable to go to the polling station:

- find out about the procedure you must follow in order to be able to vote;
- if necessary, register with the electoral commission so that the “mobile” polling box can be brought to you.

[Space for other country specifics]

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| 2 – POLLING DAY: |
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1. Go to the designated polling station with your identity documents (and your electoral card?)
2. Go up to the electoral commission member responsible for checking your identity
3. The electoral commission checks your identity and your registration on the electoral roll before handing over the voting material and do not divulge any information other than that required to ascertain your identity.
4. Go into the polling booth **alone**.

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| Attention! this is essential, since your vote is SECRET! |
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5. In the polling booth, fill in or choose the voting slip **personally**!

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| Attention! this is essential, since your vote is PERSONAL! |
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6. Fold the voting slip **yourself**, in such a way that no-one can see your vote (or place it in an envelope if this is the case).
7. Place the voting slip in the urn **yourself**: no-one else may touch it.
8. Take back your identity papers (and your electoral card, if applicable) from the electoral commission
9. Leave the polling station **without delay**: once voting has taken place, it is forbidden to remain in the polling station.

[Space for country specifics, including specific voting procedures (by mail, by proxy etc.)]

By respecting these rules, you will help to ensure that this election day is a victory for democracy.