

Quick guide

European Parliament and Welsh MEPs 2009-2014

June 2011

Introduction

The European Parliament¹ is the only directly-elected body of the European Union (EU).

There are currently 736 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), who represent the 500 million citizens across the 27 countries (“Member States”) in the EU. Approximately one third of MEPs are women at present.²

The UK has 72 out of this total, spread across 12 regions. **Wales is one of these “regions”, and has 4 MEPs.**

The life of an MEP is something of a “nomadic experience”, split across three main locations:

- Strasbourg, which is the official home of the European Parliament. 12 sittings of the EP are held in Strasbourg each year, which equates to around one week of business per month
- Brussels, the second home of the European Parliament, where most of the Committee meetings take place, together with a number of “mini-plenary” sessions held during the year
- Their constituency, which in the case of the Welsh MEPs means the whole of Wales.

¹ For a more detailed overview see [European Parliament web-site](#)

² European Parliament Information Office in the United Kingdom, [FAQs](#) [accessed 20 June 2011]

The 2009 European Parliamentary elections

European Parliamentary elections take place every five years, and the most recent elections took place in June 2009. The current MEPs will serve a term of office until May 2014. The 2009 elections took place across the EU from 4 to 7 June 2009. The results for Wales are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Results of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections in Wales³

<u>Party</u>	<u>Number of votes</u>	<u>Percentage of votes</u>	<u>Seats won</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>
British National Party	37,114	5.4		
Christian Party	13,037	1.9		
Conservative Party	145,193	21.2	1	Dr Kay Swinburne
Green Party	38,160	5.6		
Jury Team	3,793	0.6		
Labour Party	138,852	20.3	1	Derek Vaughan
Liberal Democrats	73,082	10.7		
No 2 EU: Yes to Democracy	8,600	1.3		
Plaid Cymru	126,702	18.5	1	Jill Evans
Socialist Labour Party	12,402	1.8		
UK Independence Party	87,585	12.8	1	John Bufton
Total valid votes cast (a)	684,520			
Turnout (per cent) (b)	30.5			

Source: Regional Returning Officer

Notes: (a) Total valid votes cast excludes ballot papers that are rejected for any reason.

(b) Turnout is classed as all votes cast (including spoiled papers) as a percentage of the electorate.

In 2009 Labour won one less seat than in 2004, while the UK Independence Party gained a seat, and was elected to represent Wales in the European Parliament for the first time.

Turnout in Wales for the 2009 elections was considerably lower than in 2004, decreasing from 41.9 per cent to 30.5 per cent; a decrease of 11 percentage points. Turnout in Wales and the rest of the UK has consistently been below the EU average, which was 43 per cent in 2009. There is a high level of variation across Member States. Luxembourg saw a 91 per cent turnout, while Slovakia and Lithuania both had turnouts of 20 per cent.⁴

³ For further information on the 2009 European Parliamentary elections, see Research Service, [European Parliamentary Election Results 2009](#) [accessed 23 June 2011]

⁴ European Parliament, [Results of the 2009 European Elections](#) [accessed 23 June 2011]

Welsh MEPs 2009-2014

By party and European Parliamentary political group, the four Welsh MEPs elected in 2009 are:

- **John Bufton**, UK Independence Party and Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group
- **Jill Evans**, Plaid Cymru and Greens/European Free Alliance Group
- **Dr Kay Swinburne MEP**, Welsh Conservatives and European Conservatives and Reformists Group
- **Derek Vaughan MEP**, Welsh Labour and Group for Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats

As well as being members of one of the seven political groups in the European Parliament, each of the Welsh MEPs sits on one or more of the 20 permanent Committees, which undertake the day to day legislative and policy scrutiny work of the European Parliament. They may also be selected by their political groups to sit on the special or “temporary” Committees that are established in response to issues of particular political significance for the EU, e.g. the financial crisis or to prepare for the discussions on the future multi-annual EU budget.

Finally, the Welsh MEPs may engage in various formal and informal working groups in the European Parliament, and external representative work.

The following sections give a brief resume of the Committees, working groups and other external activities that the four Welsh MEPs are involved in⁵.

John Bufton MEP: UK Independence Party, and Europe of freedom and democracy

Committees:

- Regional Development Committee (member)
- Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (substitute)

Jill Evans MEP: Plaid Cymru, and Greens/European Free Alliance

Committees:

- Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (member)
- Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (substitute)
- Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

⁵For further information, see [European Parliament web-site](#), and also the Welsh MEP's web-sites: [John Bufton](#), [Jill Evans](#), [Dr Kay Swinburne](#) and [Derek Vaughan](#)

Delegations:

- Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council
- Delegation for relations with Iraq (member)

Reports and opinions:

- Revision of the EU Directive on the Restriction of Hazardous Substances. Report adopted June 2010. Click [here](#) for details.

Other:

- Vice-Chair of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- President of the European Free Alliance

Dr Kay Swinburne MEP: Welsh Conservatives, and European Conservatives and Reformists

Committees:

- Economic and Monetary Affairs (member and Group Co-ordinator)
- Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (member)

Delegations:

- Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (member)
- Delegation for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee (substitute)
- Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council (substitute)

Reports and opinions:

Report on regulation of trading in financial instruments. Report adopted on 10 November 2010. Click [here](#) for details.

Committees:

- Budget Committee (member)
- Budgetary Control Committee (substitute)
- Special committee on the policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable European Union after 2013 (SURE Committee) (substitute)

Delegations:

- Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China (member)
- Delegation for relations with Japan (substitute)

Reports and opinions:

Opinion on the European Commission's 5th Cohesion Report and the Strategy for the post-2013 Cohesion Policy. Opinion adopted on 12 April 2011. Click [here](#) for details.

Further information

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