

Why bother with the European elections?

The EU has the power to improve the lives of people in poor communities around the world.

The EU is the biggest aid donor in the world and many of its policies affect poor communities (eg those on trade, agriculture and tax). In May, voters across the EU will elect members of the European Parliament to represent them. Elections in the UK take place on 22 May. It is crucial that MEPs who support Christian Aid's aims and priorities are elected.

Key issues in the 2014 European elections

Poverty

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the EU is legally committed to contributing to the reduction and eradication of poverty globally.

Climate change

Climate change is wreaking havoc in developing countries – whether in drought-ridden areas of sub-Saharan Africa or communities in the Philippines battling storms, floods and rising sea levels.

The EU has committed to accepting its share of responsibility for stopping global temperatures rising above 2°C (the point at which scientists predict catastrophic climate change). But there is a lack of ambition to cut carbon emissions and support clean, renewable energy. The new European Parliament must take climate change seriously and push EU member states to adopt ambitious emissions and renewable energy targets.

Tax

Tax dodging prevents developing countries from collecting an estimated **\$160bn** a year.¹ This is money that could help lift people out of poverty. It's too easy for companies to dodge tax, largely because of the secrecy surrounding multinational companies' finances.

In February, the European Parliament voted for legislation that would require member states to set up public registers of the real owners of companies. Now we need to make sure member states agree to do that.



European elections – key facts



- The European Parliament is elected by the 500 million citizens of the EU's 28 member states.
- In the 2014 elections, 751 MEPs will be elected.
- The UK will have 73 MEPs in the new Parliament: they will be elected for 12 regions.

¹ *False Profits: Robbing the poor to keep the rich tax-free*, Christian Aid, 2009.

What can you do?

The European elections are a great opportunity to raise these issues with candidates and call for action. They are also a chance to hear candidates' views and help us identify potential Christian Aid champions in the new Parliament.

Please contact as many candidates in your region as you can. **Here are some questions you might like to ask them.**

Climate change

If elected, will you commit to push for more ambitious targets for carbon emissions reductions, renewable energy and energy efficiency? And more climate finance for developing countries?

Tax

If elected, will you commit to supporting greater transparency in the accounts and ownership of multinational companies? This would help all governments make sure they're receiving the tax they're owed.

Development

If elected, will you commit to ensure that all EU policies help efforts to eradicate global poverty?

How to contact the candidates in your region

You can find contact details for all candidates at <http://bit.ly/EPcandidates>

Please email, phone, or write to the candidates in your region.

Alternatively, please arrange to meet or go to public meetings with the candidates in your area, and ask questions there.

And please remember to vote.

Keep us posted

Please share any responses you get from candidates. Contact us at Churches Campaigns, Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT; 020 7523 2264 or campaigns@christian-aid.org

This helps us engage with MEPs after the elections. Thank you.

