



# A quick guideline to the upcoming elections and referendum in Ireland - 2019



# Divorce referendum

## What's the referendum on?

The proposal is about two issues relating to divorce, namely how long people must be living apart before applying for a divorce, and the recognition of foreign divorces. There will be one question on the ballot paper and voters can either vote “YES” to allow both changes, or “NO” to reject both changes. **Voters cannot accept one change and reject the other.**

## The proposed change:

On 24 May 2019, you will be asked to vote on two proposed changes to Article 41.3, the section that deals with divorce:

1. Remove the section that requires couples to be living apart for four out of the last five years. This section would not be replaced by anything.
2. Replace the section that prevents people with foreign divorces from remarrying in Ireland, and replacing with the following text:

**“Provision may be made by law for the recognition under the law of the State of a dissolution of marriage granted under the civil law of another state.”**

# Divorce referendum

## How to vote in the referendum?

1. You will be given a ballot paper with the proposed change to the constitution regarding the divorce laws, it will be in the form of a question.
2. Mark “X” on either the NO section or the YES section. Do not mark with any other letter, number or sign on the paper.
3. NO means you disagree with the proposed change. YES means you agree with the proposed change
4. Only registered Irish citizens over the age of 18 can vote in a referendum.

## The outcomes of a YES or NO vote:



### The legal effect of a YES vote

If a majority votes Yes, then the Constitution will change.

- 1 The Constitution will no longer require a person applying for a divorce to have lived apart from his or her spouse for at least four years. The minimum period of four years of living apart set out in the Family Law (Divorce) Act 1996 will continue to apply, unless and until the Oireachtas changes the law.

and

- 2 The Oireachtas already has power to make laws recognising foreign divorces. This power will be made explicit in the Constitution.

The explicit constitutional prohibition on a person remarrying in the State who has obtained a foreign divorce not recognised under Irish law will be removed. It will still be prohibited for a person to remarry in the State unless their foreign divorce is recognised under Irish law.



### The legal effect of a NO vote

If a majority votes No, then the Constitution will remain unchanged.

- 1 The Constitution will continue to require that those applying for a divorce must have been living apart for at least four out of the previous five years. The Oireachtas will not have the power to change this.

and

- 2 The existing power of the Oireachtas to make laws recognising foreign divorces will not change.

The explicit constitutional prohibition on a person remarrying in the State who has obtained a foreign divorce not recognised under Irish law will remain.

# Local elections

## What are the local elections?

Local elections are held in Ireland every 5 years, in the month of May or June. The 2019 elections will be held on Friday 24 May 2019. At these elections, members of the local community elect councilors to represent the community in local authorities.

## Who can vote in these elections?

You do not have to be an Irish citizen to vote in the local election. However, you must be ordinarily resident in the state on 1 September 2018, to register on the 2019/2020 register of electors.

## How to cast your vote in the elections?

1. You will be given a ballot paper with a list of all candidates running in your local area. Their party icon will be shown and most likely their photo as well.
2. To cast your vote, arrange the candidates by number in order of preference. Mark “1” beside your most preferred candidate and then “2” beside your second preferred candidate etc.
3. You do not have to arrange all candidates on the list, you may choose only a few or even just one of them if you wish to do so.

# European elections

## What are the European Parliamentary elections?

Direct elections to the European parliament are held every 5 years. In these elections, EU citizens choose who will represent their interests in the European Parliament. The next elections will be held on a 4 day period from May 23 till May 26 2019.

## How the elections work:

1. Ireland is expected to have 13 representatives in the EU Parliament. 4 from Dublin, 5 from Ireland south and 4 from Midlands and North West.
2. There are 59 candidates in total. 19 in Dublin, 17 in Midlands and North West and 23 in Ireland South.
3. Only registered Irish citizens over the age of 18 can vote in this Particular election.

## How to cast your vote in the elections?

1. You will be given a ballot paper with a list of all candidates running in your region. Their party icon will be shown and most likely their photo as well.
2. To cast your vote, arrange the candidates by number in order of preference. Mark “1” beside your most preferred candidate and then “2” beside your second preferred candidate etc.
3. You do not have to arrange all candidates on the list, you may choose only a few or even just one of them if you wish to do so.

# Important note

1. You have been given a blessing to cast your vote and express your opinion on local and International affairs regarding Ireland. So please use this opportunity and don't waste it!
2. Vote for whoever you think best serves your country/community concerns and interests. Make sure to research your local candidates and parties before making a decision!
3. Remember that to make a difference you must act and be pro active. If you can vote in the elections and you choose not to, then don't complain about the outcome if it doesn't come your way later.