

Situations and procedures

Timetable and reporting deadlines at the EU Referendum

This document sets out the timetable and reporting deadlines for the referendum on the UK membership of the EU

Updated 28 April 2016

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Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version please contact the Electoral Commission:

Tel: 020 7271 0500

Email: publications@electoralcommission.org.uk

Terms and expressions we use

We use '**must**' when we refer to a specific legal or regulatory requirement. We use '**should**' for items we consider to be minimum good practice, but which are not legal requirements. You do not have to follow this guidance, but if you do, you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law.

Our approach to enforcement

The Commission regulates political funding and spending in a way that is effective, proportionate and fair. We are committed to providing those we regulate with a clear understanding of their regulatory obligations through our guidance documents and advice service. If you are unsure of how any of the rules apply to you, please call us for advice. We are happy to help, so please get in touch.

We use advice and guidance proactively in order to secure compliance. And we take enforcement action, using our investigatory powers and sanctions, where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in order to meet our enforcement aims and objectives.

If you do not comply with legal or regulatory requirements you or your organisation may be subject to civil or criminal sanctions. You can find more information about the Commission's approach to enforcement at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/party-finance/enforcement

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Timetable and reporting deadlines at the EU Referendum

This document explains:

The timetables and deadlines for the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU to be held on 23 June 2016

The document covers:

- The referendum period
- The referendum timetables for designation and reporting

Related documents:

- [Donations for EU referendum campaigners](#)
- [Loans for EU referendum campaigners](#)
- [Spending for EU referendum campaigners](#)
- [Pre-poll reporting for EU referendum campaigners](#)
- [Designation process for the EU Referendum](#)

Forms:

- [EUR2 – Application for designation as lead campaigner](#)

Summary

Referendums should be carried out in a way that promotes public confidence. They should be credible, transparent and fair.

This document explains the timetable and deadlines for the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU.

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Introduction

A referendum is being held on 23 June 2016 on the UK's membership of the European Union.

We have statutory responsibilities in relation to the regulation of campaigners. The Chief Counting Officer is responsible for ensuring the proper and effective conduct of the referendum and the conduct of the poll.

Our focus is on voters and on putting their interests first. This underpins everything we do.

Our objectives for referendums are that:

- they should be well-run and produce results that are accepted
- there should be integrity and transparency of campaign funding and spending

About this guidance

This guidance gives specific dates and details about the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. You should read it alongside our other guidance documents, which set out the rules you must follow during the referendum campaign. You can find these on our [website](#).

For more information see:

- [Introduction to a referendum](#)
- [Campaigning and registering for EU referendum campaigners](#)

The referendum period

There are rules on checking, accepting and reporting donations before the referendum. There is a formal campaign period called the 'referendum period' when the spending limits will also apply.

The referendum period begins on 15 April and ends on 23 June 2016, the day of the referendum.

You must register with us if you intend to spend more than £10,000 on campaigning in this period.

You must register even if you are already registered with us as:

- a political party
- a non-party campaigner
- a campaigner at a previously held referendum

You can register as a campaigner using [PEF Online](#) or alternatively use form [EUR1 Application to register as a campaigner in a referendum](#) on our website. Once you are registered, there are rules you must follow on:

- checking donations and loans
- how much you can spend during the referendum period
- reporting before the poll
- reporting after the poll

For more information see:

- [Campaigning and registering for EU referendum campaigners](#)
- [Spending for EU referendum campaigners](#)

 Important

If you are campaigning in the May 2016 polls you should read our guidance on the impact of overlapping regulated periods.

- [The referendum period and the regulated period for May 2016 elections](#)

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The referendum timetables

The following tables show the dates and deadlines for campaigners in the EU referendum.

Timetable for designation of lead campaigners

Registered referendum campaigners can apply to become designated lead campaign groups to act as the lead campaign group on behalf of those campaigning for that outcome.

Under our statutory role we must make sure that the lead campaign groups adequately represent those campaigning for each outcome. We can designate a lead campaign group for both referendum outcomes or one outcome or we can decide not to designate a group for an outcome if they do not meet the statutory test.

More information on the timetable related to the conduct of the EU Referendum and the timing of our public awareness work please see:

- [Timetable for the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union: 23 June 2016](#)

Commencement of registration provisions in the Act	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Polling day 23 June 2016
Campaigners can register with us	Registered campaigners can apply to be designated organisations	Commission makes designation decision	Designated organisations can use their lead campaigner benefits	
1 February	4 March – 31 March	1 April - 14 April	15 April 2016	

Reporting before the referendum: pre-poll donation and loan reports

In the run up to the referendum, registered campaigners (other than registered political parties but including minor parties) must report certain donations and loans to us. This is called pre-poll reporting.

Registered campaigners must submit four pre-poll reports setting out what donations they have received and loans they have entered into on or after 1 February 2016 that are over £7,500. This includes donations and loans received on or after 1 February but before the campaigner have registered. Registered campaigners, and all those intending to become registered campaigners, must record all donations over £500 they receive, and loans they enter into during this time.

Timetable for pre poll reports

The table below sets out the reporting periods and the deadline dates the pre-poll reports must be received by us.

Reporting period	Deadline for pre-poll reports
1 February – 21 April	28 April
22 April – 12 May	19 May
13 May – 9 June	16 June
10 June – 22 June	29 June

For more information, see:

- [Pre poll reporting for EU referendum campaigners](#)

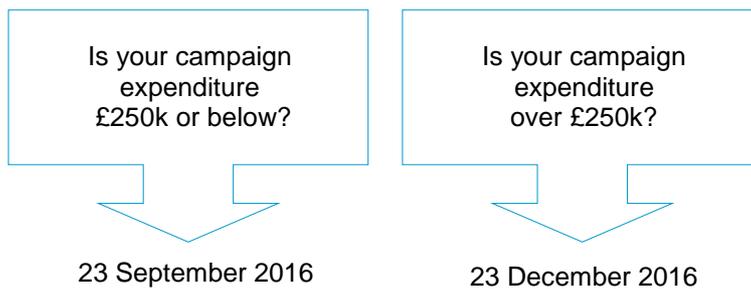
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Reporting after the referendum: reporting and invoices

All registered campaigners, including political parties must report their campaign spending, donations and loans after the referendum.

The date by which you must report to us depends on how much you spent on your campaign.

The date by which you must report to us depends on how much you spent on your campaign. The deadlines are shown below.



For more information see:

- [Spending for EU referendum campaigners](#)

Receiving invoices from suppliers

You must obtain all your invoices from suppliers by 25 July 2016.

If you do not get an invoice within 30 days, you must not pay it after that time without getting a court order to do so. You should make your suppliers aware of this.

Paying invoices from suppliers

You must pay all your invoices from suppliers by 22 August 2016.

If you do not pay an invoice within 60 days, you must then get a court order to be able to do so.



Timetable of dates

Action	Date	Notes
Registrations open	1 February	You can find the form here :
Designation application process	4 March – 31 March	You can find the guidance here and form here :
Decision making for designation applications	1 April – 14 April	You can find the guidance here
Referendum period starts	15 April	Spending limits apply from this date
1 st pre poll report due	28 April	This report covers the period 1 February – 21 April You can find the form here and guidance here .
2 nd pre poll report due	19 May	This report covers the period 22 April – 12 May You can find the form here and guidance here .
3 rd pre poll report due	16 June	This report covers the period 13 May – 9 June You can find the form here and guidance here .
Date of referendum and end of referendum period	23 June	
4 th pre poll report due	29 June	This report covers the period 10 June – 22 June You can find the form here and guidance here .

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Action	Date	Notes
Last date to receive invoices	25 July	You can find the guidance here
Last date to pay invoices	22 August	You can find the guidance here
Submit spending return if your return is under £250,000	23 September	You can find the guidance here and form here :
Submit spending return if your return is over £250,000	23 December	You can find the guidance here and forms here :

How we can help

You can find more information in the guidance documents we have suggested in this document, or you can view our full range of guidance and up-to-date resources on our website.

You can contact us on one of the phone numbers or email addresses below. We are here to help, so please get in touch.

Call us on:

- England: 0333 103 1928
pef@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Scotland: 0333 103 1928
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Wales: 0333 103 1929
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- Northern Ireland: 0333 103 1928
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Visit us at www.electoralcommission.org.uk

We welcome feedback on our guidance – just email us at:
pef@electoralcommission.org.uk