

UK Electoral Commission urges British Citizens living abroad:
“Don't lose your right to vote”

The UK's Electoral Commission has launched a campaign to remind British citizens living abroad that they can vote in UK elections and referendums – but only if they are on the UK's Electoral Register before the applicable cut-off dates. For example, if a UK Parliamentary general election were to be called for May 5, voters would need to register by March 11.

British citizens living abroad are entitled to register as “overseas voters” if they have been on a UK Electoral Register during the past 15 years. If they were too young to register when they left the UK, then a parent or guardian must meet that 15-year requirement. To make it as convenient as possible for British citizens living abroad to vote, the UK Electoral Commission permits voters their choice of voting by mail, voting by proxy by designating an individual in the UK to vote on their behalf, or voting in person in the UK if they happen to be in the country at election time.

The UK Electoral Commission has made its Electoral Registration forms and detailed instructions available on its voter information website at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk. The completed Electoral Registration form should be sent to the local Electoral Registration office in the UK where the individual was last registered to vote.

According to Angela Salt, Communication Director at The Electoral Commission, "It's important for British citizens living abroad to realize that they need to be on the UK Electoral Register to be able to vote. We are urging eligible British citizens living abroad to act now so they don't lose their right to vote."

Editor's notes:

1. Since its establishment in 2000, the UK Electoral Commission has been responsible for promoting awareness of the democratic and electoral system. As part of its mission, the Commission has sought to encourage potential voters to register on the UK's Register of Electors. The Commission runs an annual registration campaign in February each year to encourage voters to register in time for spring elections.
2. Unlike in the UK, there is no legal requirement for eligible citizens living abroad to register to vote.