

# N O V E

## 2019 EU ELECTIONS

What you need to know  
27 MAY 2019

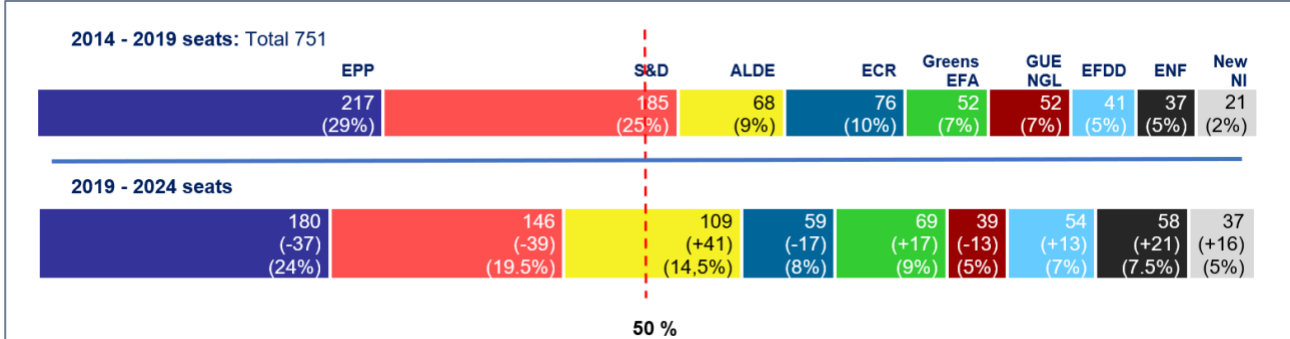
### OVERVIEW

Europe has voted, and change is afoot. Some predictions may have been a little overzealous – the far right may not have quite the clout it would have hoped for – while in the case of the Greens in particular, pollsters did not predict the surge in support that has taken place. NOVE's [last update](#) on the elections remains relevant on the question of the formation of political groups, which will dominate the Parliament's agenda for the next four weeks. In the meantime, here are our main takeaways from the vote, based on figures available as of noon on 27 May.

### THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE

The results are in, and the winner is...well, the jury is still out. Spokespersons of different political groups and *Spitzenkandidaten* spent most of last night bending over backwards to spin the results and present them in a victorious light.

The latest projection of seats looks as follows (source: [European Parliament](#)):



- The projection above is based on the **presumption that current political groups will continue to exist** and calculation accounts only for the current member parties.
- The numbers in the NI/New column reflect the lack of clarity as to where newly represented parties which do not currently align with any group may end up.
- Final numbers will not be available until later this week.

### Key take-aways:

- **Turnout** was almost 10% higher than five years ago (at 50.93%) and the highest in the past 20 years, with more than half of EU citizens with voting rights casting ballots. A combination of frequent EU-related discussions on national level and a high polarisation contributed to this heightened participation.
- Based on the **preliminary results** shown above, the EPP will remain the largest group with 180 MEPs (although also being the biggest loser in absolute terms, with 37 fewer seats), followed by S&D with 146 (-39), ALDE with 109 (+41), Greens with 69 (+17), ECR with 59 (-17) and GUE with 39 (-13).

- It remains unclear how the **right-wing group formed around the Italian Lega party** – the European Alliance of Peoples and Nations (EAPN) – will structure itself, but their members won a total of 71 seats.
- As it stands, **the EFDD group no longer fulfils the key criterion for group formation**, i.e. it doesn't have representatives from 7 Member States. It is therefore possible the Brexit Party will join EAPN.
- In total, **Eurosceptic populists are likely to compose a quarter of the Parliament**, instead of up to one third, as some predicted.
- Both results and statements of political leaders during the electoral night suggest a **shift away from the way the politics has been conducted in Brussels in the past**, especially considering the role of the EPP.
- The largest **national delegations** for each group are likely to be the following:

Largest delegation per group			
Group	Country	Party	No. of MEPs
EPP	Germany	CDU/CSU	29
S&D	Spain	PSOE	20
ALDE	France	Renaissance	21
Greens	Germany	Gruene	22
ENF	Italy	Lega	28
ECR	Poland	PiS	22
GUE	France	FI	6

## THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN!

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What resonated in the corridors of the European Parliament (EP) last night and will continue to do so in the coming years, was the sound of millions of votes, cast across the continent, asking for a change. That desire for change manifested itself in different ways. We look into the main messages of the votes and results below.

### No more status quo

Voters punished the two largest groups – EPP and S&D – and decided to give a chance to some other parties (from Green, to liberal, to far-right and populist) instead. This breaks with the longstanding EPP/S&D dominance of the EP from previous mandates. In addition, the likely new progressive alliance of ALDE, S&D and Greens, with a total of around 325 MEPs (depending on the decisions of the newly represented parties) will likely spell the end of the EPP's domineering position in the legislative arena, where the once foremost group could be reduced to the level of a junior coalition partner or even pushed out of some legislative initiatives. Statements from leaders and *Spitzenkandidaten* of the Socialists, Liberals and Greens certainly indicated their wish to subdue the Christian Democrats and Conservatives.

### Political movements

The electoral results and the new composition of the EP will have a significant impact on the EU and national level alike, from the future collaboration within the Parliament and (s)election of new leaders of EU institutions, to the stability of national governments. The better-than-expected results of the Greens, the surge of the (far) right, and the defeat of many incumbent governments were hallmarks of the election.

#### The surge of the (far) right

Populist and nationalist parties gained a lot of seats at these elections, but fewer than some anticipated, and it still remains unclear whether they will be able to capitalise on it. The French National Rally (RN) and the Italian Lega came first in their respective countries, the Brexit Party dominated the vote in the UK and the Flemish far right (Vlaams Belang) made surprising gains in Belgium. However, the difference between the parties ready to remain in perpetual opposition in Brussels and at home, and those governing or having the ambition to govern at the national level may lead the right-wing either to start acting in a more constructive

way in the EP (they will certainly have the numbers and therefore positions to do so), or to diverge based on their relations to the establishment politics.

### EPP soul searching

EPP suffered major blows in the election, with their member parties losing a total of 37 seats compared to 2014, suffering setbacks in all big Member States (and the worst ever result in France despite having a French President – Joseph Daul). Set to play second fiddle to the S&D-ALDE-Greens block, who clearly indicated their desires to break the EPP's dominance, Christian Democrats will need to use their retreat to San Sebastian in mid-June to answer some tough questions. These questions include: Should they stay in power-sharing structures, sharing the blame and responsibility with a limited impact on the agenda? Should they give up governing the EU for a mandate and act as a constructive opposition? Would that imply forsaking the Commission presidency? And, considering the failure of their Austrian experiment of governing with the far-right, could they (or should they) work with the large (far)-right-wing group in the Parliament?

### S&D turning South

As predicted, the S&D did well in the South of Europe, winning in Spain and Portugal, as well as in Malta, and managing to prevent a continued decline in Italy. With abysmal results in Central and Eastern Europe, where the German SPD came third behind the EPP and Greens, and the governing SMER in Slovakia and PSD in Romania were defeated. Furthermore, S&D members proved incapable of making inroads in Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechia or Poland. The socialist group will therefore be dominated by their Southern delegations. Despite losing more than 35 seats compared to the last mandate, the S&D will aim to position itself as a leader of the progressive block with ALDE and the Greens at its core, supported by GUE and other parties, including the potential block around Italy's 5Stars. In theory, such a loose coalition could have a slim majority in the Parliament, which was clearly indicated even by their *Spitzenkandidat* Frans Timmermans.

### ALDE hitting hard

Buoyed by huge overall gains in these elections (109 seats, a net gain of 41), and despite their governing parties losing in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands, ALDE (whose cooperation with the French President Macron's En Marche is no longer questioned by Brussels insiders) assumed the post of winner of the elections. Margrethe Vestager, speaking on behalf of their "Team Europe", sent a clear message that the EPP would have to give up their institutional grip and that S&D would have to treat the Liberals as equals if they are serious about the cooperation of progressive forces in Europe.

### Green wave

With outstanding results and a huge impact of their core messages on political narratives of other left-of-centre parties, the Greens are arguably the biggest winners of the election. With strong showings in Germany, where they came second with 22 seats, France (12), UK (11, with EFA) and Belgium (3 – and they did well at national elections, too), Greens will be a force capable of influencing policies both in Brussels and increasingly so in national capitals.

### ECR conundrum

While managing to win against a unified opposition in Poland and seeing gains in the Netherlands, Czechia and some other Member States, ECR still suffered losses mainly due to the catastrophe of the UK Conservatives, who came fifth. The Conservatives have long objected to ECR's cooperation with other right-wing parties and it remains to be seen how will a domineering Polish PiS delegation aim to position the Group, especially towards the alliance led by Salvini, but also the parties such as Spain's Vox and potentially, Hungary's Fidesz.

### Losses on the left

The GUE (Nordic Left) Group is the silent loser of the election. While many focussed on EPP and S&D results, GUE dropped a quarter of its seats in the Parliament and has probably lost its only official member of the European Council (Alexis Tsipras). The defeat may worsen should Syriza decide to leave GUE altogether, bringing the tally of seats lost to a third.

## Brexit correction

While the results of the right-wing populists, ALDE and Greens may resemble resounding victories, it is worth mentioning that those groups would be hit the hardest by Brexit. In fact, all Groups stand to lose the UK MEPs after Brexit, except the EPP which does not have a party in the UK. EPP will also benefit the most from the post-Brexit redistribution of the 27 seats – as explained in our [previous note](#).

## National spill-over

It is often said that all elections are national elections. And EU elections are not only mainly fought over national issues, but sometimes can have backdraught effect, setting ablaze the smouldering discontent:

- The first casualty of the European elections was the **Greek** Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. The defeat of his Syriza at the ballot on Sunday resulted in his calling for an early election on 30 June. Previously the general election was scheduled for October. EPP member party New Democracy is likely to win the general election.
- In **Slovakia**, the newly formed Progressive Slovakia, after securing a victory in Presidential election managed to win the European ballot, too, with 20%, compared to 15.7% of the ruling SMER (S&D). With another coalition member, Most-Hid, staying below the threshold, pressure for early elections is likely to mount.
- Finally, nowhere have these elections been more tumultuous than in the **UK**. The Prime Minister Theresa May resigned on Friday, the morning after the polls were closed. The Brexit Party (likely to join the right-wing group with Lega) scored a resounding victory and governing Conservatives (ECR) have suffered the worst defeat ever. However, the combined votes for parties advocating the UK remaining in the EU (Liberal Democrats, Greens and SNP) amount to more than the Brexit Party and UKIP together. This sets a backdrop for the coming weeks where Tories have to pick their new leader, who then needs to decide whether the country goes to a next election, a second Brexit referendum, tries again to pass the Brexit deal with the EU (or to negotiate some changes to the deal or another extension), or just simply crashes out of the EU. The political picture painted at these elections favours a pro-Brexit Tory leadership, naming the next Prime Minister without an election and overall, more uncertainty over Brexit in general.

## THE ELATED ELEVEN

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We will have plenty of time to get to know all 751 MEPs in the months and years to come. Many of them we already know from the previous mandate(s), so here we present you a dozen newcomers we reckon could play significant roles in the next Parliament:



### **Katarina Barley (Germany, Social Democratic Party, S&D)**

She is the Federal Minister for Justice in Merkel's fourth government. Prior to that, she was Minister of Family Affairs, Women and Youth and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. She led the German SPD party in these elections and will play a crucial role in the S&D Group. It is likely she will become one of the digital champions, interested in the platform economy. She is a member of the Europa-Union Deutschland, a nonpartisan NGO, which advocates for a Federal Europe, making Barley one of the likely leaders of the progressive federalist alliance in the Parliament.



### **Maria Manuel Leitao Marques (Portugal, Socialist Party, S&D)**

In Portugal, she has been the Minister for Administrative Modernisation since November 2015. Prior to that, she was State Secretary for the same portfolio. She should be a leader in the Portuguese delegation and more importantly in the S&D group. Ms Leitao Marques is an economics professor and has been interested in working on modernising the legislative framework on internal markets and technology. Moreover, she has been keen to work on structural funds and improving funding for research.



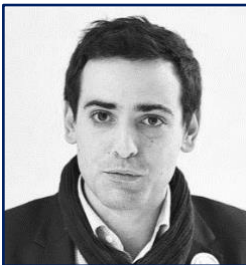
**Corina Crețu (Romania, Pro Romania, affiliation TBD)**

She is the current Commissioner for Regional Policy. She was an MEP from 2007 to 2014, and served as a Vice-Chair of the Committee for Development and member of the special committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis. She briefly served as a Vice-President of the European Parliament before being nominated Commissioner in 2014. She left the governing PSD party in Romania earlier this year to join the Pro Romania party of the former PM Victor Ponta. Crețu is very interested in the digital agenda and is poised to be one of the key players in the next mandate.



**Carlo Calenda (Italy, Democratic Party, S&D)**

He is the former Minister for Economic Development in Matteo Renzi's and Paolo Gentiloni's governments. Prior to that, he served as Italy's permanent Representative to the European Union. He is a vocal opponent of the Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini and very active on human rights issues. His experience in the European Council should make him one of the key MEPs in future trilogues. Calenda will be a political heavyweight and a key personality in the next Pro-European alliance in the Parliament.



**Stéphane Séjourné (France, En Marche, ALDE)**

He is the former political adviser and 2017 presidential campaign strategist of French President Macron and was considered to be one of his closest lieutenants during the campaign. Prior to that, he worked as advisor in the French economics ministry. Séjourné was number six on the En Marche list for the European Elections, and as Macron's political liaison with the ALDE Group, could play a major role in the French delegation and in defining the priorities of the liberals' Group and the potential wider progressive coalition with the S&D.



**Luis Garicano (Spain, Ciudadanos, ALDE)**

He is the chief economist of the Ciudadanos party in Spain. He serves as a Vice-President of ALDE party and is one of the seven ALDE candidates for senior EU positions, known as "Team Europe". As an economist, he has been a professor at the LSE and the University of Chicago, and concentrated on technological innovation, inequality and banking systems. He led the Ciudadanos list and with the party's growing strength, Garicano could play a major role in the next ALDE Group and in the Parliament as a whole on the Economic and Monetary Union, and single market issues.



**Geert Bourgeois (Belgium, N-VA, ECR)**

He is the current Minister President of Flanders since 2014. He served before that as the Flemish Minister for Public Governance, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism. He is one of the founders of the Flemish NVA party that advocates greater independence of the region and led their list at the European Elections. He will be a powerhouse of the NVA delegation which will likely join the ECR group, and defend an "eco-realist", safety and security, and pro-business agenda. Bourgeois' impact will also depend on the results of government formation in Belgium.



**Beata Szydło (Poland, Law and Justice, ECR)**

She is the former Prime Minister of Poland and the current Deputy Prime Minister. Longstanding heavyweight of the governing Law and Justice party, she will be a leader of the key delegation in the ECR Group. Her legislative clout beyond ECR, however, remains unclear as the Parliament has harshly criticised her government over the Polish Constitutional Court crisis in 2015. Nevertheless, a veteran of EUCO battles, Szydło will be a political power broker in the Parliament.





**Valdis Dombrovskis (Latvia, New Unity, EPP)**

He is the former Prime Minister of Latvia from 2009 to 2014. Since 2016, he is Commission Vice-President for Financial Stability, Financial Services and the Capital Markets Union. He was the lead candidate of his party in the European Election. It is likely he will seek a position as a Commissioner in the next mandate, but with a complex coalition in Riga, he could stay in the Parliament and become a leading figure in the EPP Group. In the EU bubble, he is recognised as one of the leading figures on internal market reforms, European finance and budget questions.



**Ewa Kopacz (Poland, Civic Platform, EPP)**

She is the former Prime Minister for Poland between 2014 and 2015. Prior to that, she was Minister of Health for four years and speaker of the lower house of parliament. As a senior figure in her party, with her former Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, she could play a leading role in the EPP Polish delegation and the group in general. Kopacz will likely focus on health and environment issues, as well as the rule of law and human rights. The tenuous political situation in Poland could complicate future cooperation between EPP and Polish-led ECR.



**Tomas Tobé (Sweden, Moderate, EPP)**

He is the former Secretary General of the Moderate party and the head of their EU elections list. As a member of the Swedish parliament, he closely followed issues related to entrepreneurship, labour market and internal market and served as party spokesperson for business policy. As the future head of the Swedish delegation, Tobé will play a significant role in the EPP's traditionally business-friendly Nordic block. He will likely also closely follow issues related to justice and fundamental rights.

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**NEXT STEPS**

The elections were the first (and the only!) transparent part of the process of institutional transition. Starting from this morning, the formation of the political groups, negotiations on the next Commission and Council presidents, ECB head, portfolios and an array of other posts begin - mostly behind closed doors.

Impact of the Elections on the Commission President nomination

The EU Treaties state that the European heads of state and government should consider the results of the EU elections when nominating the Commission President. One could argue that as still the biggest party, despite heavy losses, the EPP again has some justification to claim the role. At the same time, out of the parties represented in the European Council, ALDE was the only one to make gains in these elections, yet they were defeated in almost all Member States where they govern. Both Manfred Weber and Frans Timmermans (EPP and PES *Spitzenkandidaten*) led their national parties to victories, but admitted their European parties lost last night. So where does it leave the process to replace Jean-Claude Juncker? Wide open! Tomorrow, leaders of European parties will meet to analyse the results and form their strategies for negotiations. It promises to be a long process.

## Timeline of the transition

28 MAY	<p><b>EUROPEAN COUNCIL SUMMIT (DINNER)</b> <i>EUCO will open the negotiations for the new Strategic Agenda and the new institutional line-up.</i></p> <p><b>SUMMITS OF EPP, PES AND ALDE LEADERS (LUNCH)</b> <i>The leaders will align their positions and priorities per party lines ahead of the EUCO dinner.</i></p> <p><b>EP CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS (MORNING)</b> <i>Meeting of the Groups' leaders and the President of the EP.</i></p>
28 MAY - 30 JUN	<p><b>FORMATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS</b> <i>25 MEPs representing at least 1/4 of the Member States are needed to form a group. To curb the formation of Groups for financial and power reasons alone, the EP mandates groups to set out the values and the main political objectives.</i></p> <p><b>SUBMISSION OF COMMITTEE PREFERENCES</b> <i>MEPs declare their preferences for Committees and delegations. Allocation of MEPs to respective committees is made during the first Plenary, based on the decisions of individual Groups.</i></p> <p><b>GROUPS DYNAMICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EPP</b> <u>5 June</u>: election of Chair and Vice-Chairs, deadline for submission of committee preferences and appointment of Heads of Delegation; <u>11-13 June</u> Study days: committee allocation and EP leadership (President, Vice-Presidents and Quaestors) candidates decided</li> <li>• <b>S&amp;D</b> <u>18 June</u>: election of Chair; <u>19 June</u>: election of Vice-Chairs; <u>26 June</u>: decision on candidates for EP leadership</li> <li>• <b>ALDE</b> Heads of national delegations meet in June; date for leadership election TBD; in the transition period, current Chairman Guy Verhofstadt to represent the Group</li> <li>• <b>ENF</b> <u>12 June</u>: elects its leadership; future of the group uncertain, with European Alliance of Peoples and Nations being a potential successor</li> <li>• <b>GREENS/EFA</b> <u>11-14 June</u>: election of Group leadership and candidates for EP leadership</li> <li>• <b>ECR</b> <u>19 June</u>: election of Group leadership</li> <li>• <b>GUE/NGL</b> <u>27 June</u>: group meeting involving new and current MEPs</li> <li>• <b>EFDD</b> survival of the group doubtful, assessment of activities after the Election</li> </ul>
20-21 JUN	<p><b>EUROPEAN COUNCIL SUMMIT</b> <i>The Heads of State and Government meet to nominate the President of the European Commission (who needs to be confirmed by the Parliament) and to adopt of the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. With political situation in the EUCO more complicated than ever, the process may take longer than foreseen.</i></p>
24 JUN	<p><b>DEADLINE FOR GROUP FORMATION</b> <i>Groups are due to notify the Secretariat of their composition. Composition can change afterwards, but this is the deadline for fulfilling requirements for formations</i></p>
1-4 JUL	<p><b>INAUGURAL STRASBOURG PLENARY SESSION</b> <i>1 July: Official end of the Parliament's 8<sup>th</sup> term.</i></p> <p><b>ELECTION OF THE EP PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS AND QUAESTORS</b> <i>2 July: Parliament's 9th term starts; MEPs elect the President, 14 Vice-Presidents and five Quaestors.</i></p> <p><b>CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES</b> <i>2 July: decision on the number and composition of Parliament's committees.</i></p> <p><b>MEETING OF QUAESTORS</b> <i>3 July: The College of Quaestors constitutes and reviews the rules of procedure.</i></p> <p><b>CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS</b> <i>4 July: leaders of the political groups and the new President of the EP decide which legislative initiatives from the previous legislature should continue in the next mandate.</i></p>
15-18 JUL	<p><b>SECOND STRASBOURG PLENARY SESSION – ELECTION OF COMMITTEES' CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS</b> <i>Members of Committees elect their respective Chairs and Vice-Chairs.</i></p>
SEPT	<p><b>ELECTION OF COORDINATORS</b> <i>Political groups will elect their coordinators and vice-coordinators for each parliamentary committee between 3 July and 25 July; they act as the group's main spokespersons in that committee and together prepare decisions to be taken by the committee.</i></p> <p><b>ALLOCATION OF OLD FILES TO NEW RAPPORTEURS</b> <i>Members of each Committee decide how to allocate the pending files from the previous legislature choosing new rapporteurs who will lead the work.</i></p>