

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT POST-BREXIT

11 February 2020

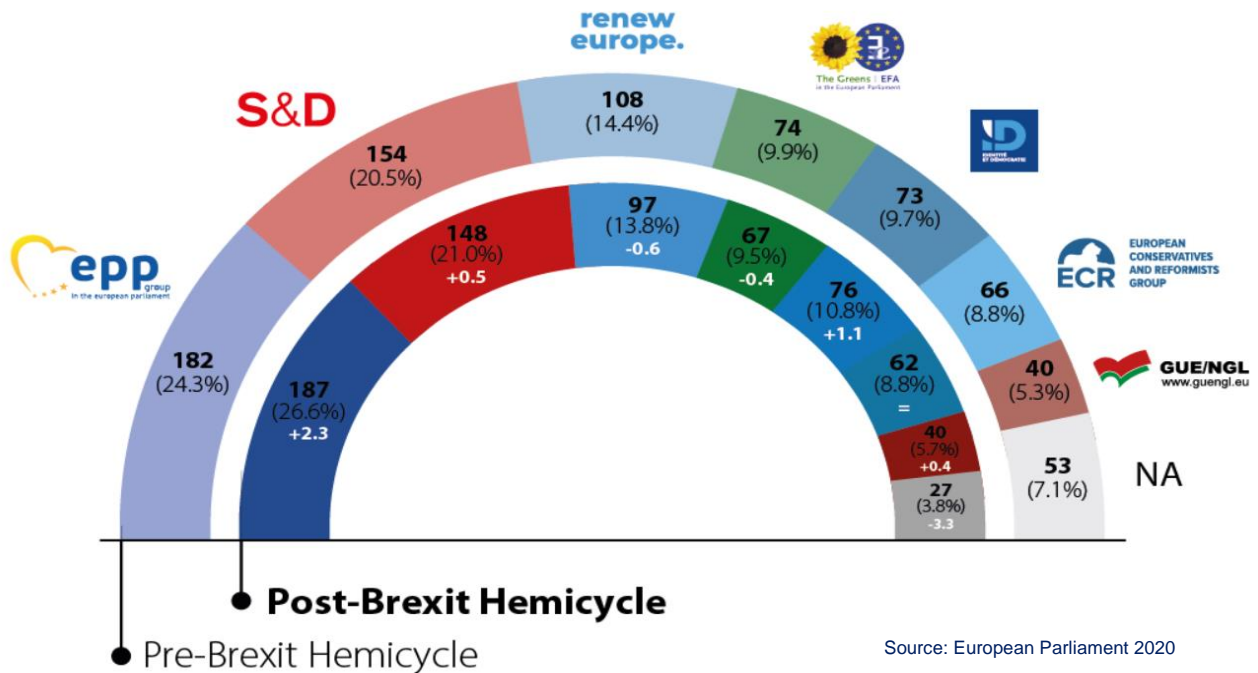
Three and a half years after the Brexit referendum, the United Kingdom (UK) officially left the EU on 31 January at midnight. The occasion was unceremonious and sombre in the Brussels institutions [bar the Brexit party’s flag-waving] and unsurprisingly polarising across the Channel, with a tartan of mourning wakes and celebrations. As a consequence, the face of our continent and our Union have been profoundly changed. And with that, so were the institutions – none more than the European Parliament (EP).

The note below describes the post-Brexit numerical changes to delegations and committees and analyses the impact on internal dynamics in the EP’s political groups, as well as the overall political balance in the Parliament. Finally, it presents the new 27 MEPs, 24 of which have been accredited while we still await for the three Dutch MEPs to pass the special internal procedure before they join the ranks of their colleagues.

POST-BREXIT PARLIAMENT

Member States gaining seats

Following the Brexit, the EP will count **705 seats instead of 751**. Of the 73 UK seats, 27 will be redistributed to current member states and the remaining 46 will be held in reserve for potential future EU enlargements. No member state has lost on its representation, **France** and **Spain** gain the most (**five** new MEPs each), followed by **Italy** and the **Netherlands** (**three** each), Ireland (two) and Poland, Romania, Sweden, Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Denmark, Slovakia and Finland with one seat each.



Political groups: winners and losers

When it comes to political groups, those who stand to benefit the most are the **EPP** and **ID**, with **five** and **three** new members respectively – neither of them having had MEPs from the UK. **S&D** shrunk by **six** MEPs, losing a large UK Labour delegation, one less than the **Greens/EFA** suffering the departure of both Green MEPs and Scottish National Party deputies. The group most affected by Brexit is **Renew Europe**, losing a net total of **11** seats. **ECR's** numbers dwindled by **four** and **GUE/NGL's** remained **unchanged**. The question remains whether Italy's **5-Star Movement** will manage to transition from political orphans into one of the groups – the **Greens/EFA** remaining the most likely destination.

Impact on coalitions forming

Politically speaking, there will be some difference compared to the pre-Brexit EP. The EPP slightly bounced back, but remains below the 29% of seats they commanded in the last mandate. **The “Progressive coalition”** of S&D, RE and the Greens/EFA, supported by GUE/NGL, shrunk, losing some prominent voices in the process (see “Key Brexit departures” table below), and **would now have to fully rely on the 5-Star Movement for a majority in the Parliament and Committees**. Combined with the more assertive role of the EPP, this **makes space for a more centrist consensus-based majority moving forward**.

As a consequence of this re-balancing, internal political and policy differences within the Groups may get exacerbated moving forward, especially between more market-focussed and socially oriented members of the kingmaker Renew Europe group. The policy landscape in the coming months, which includes the concretisation of the Green Deal, the Industrial Strategy and the Just Transition Fund (amongst others) will also challenge the cohesion of other Groups. This could further complicate an already complex decision-making process in the EP.

Impact on Committees

With the changed numbers and proportional representation, there will be changes to the power balance and representation of Groups in Parliamentary Committees, which themselves will face some changes in terms of numbers and the composition.

Three committees will see a change in the number of MEPs – **ENVI** (by 5 members to 81), **ITRE** (+6 to 78) and **INTA** (+2 to 43), meaning that despite an overall decrease in the number of MEPs, there would be more seats in the committees, which in turn means more MEPs having multiple responsibilities.

Brexit also meant that a number of important positions in the Committees and political groups remained vacated and would need to be reallocated (see table on the right).

In addition, the newly elected MEPs are allocated seats in the Committees and delegations within their own Groups first and in the EP's bodies afterwards, so the distributive process may take some time.

Key Brexit departures

Chairs & Vice-Chairs who will be replaced:

- Lucy NETHSINGHA (RE), Chair, JURI Committee
- Chris DAVIES (RE), Chair, PECH Committee
- Seb DANCE (S&D), Vice-Chair, ENVI Committee
- Julie WARD (S&D), Vice-Chair, CULT Committee
- Irina VON WIESE (RE), Vice-Chair, DROI Subcommittee

Coordinators who will be replaced:

- Shaffaq MOHAMMED (RE), Deputy Coordinator, CULT Committee
- Jude KIRTON-DARLING (S&D), Coordinator, PETI Committee
- Irina VON WIESE (RE), Coordinator, DROI Subcommittee
- Geoffrey VAN ORDEN (ECR), Coordinator, SEDE Subcommittee

The new composition of the Committees will be confirmed this week in Strasbourg and vacated posts should start being filled in as of the following week.

POST-BREXIT GROUPS

EPP – PROFITING FROM BREXIT

The largest group in the EP is winning the most from the post-Brexit re-distribution of seats. Not only is the EPP not losing any MEPs, but it picked 5 new members – from Estonia, Italy, Ireland, Slovakia and Spain. As a consequence of the UK departure and an Estonian MEP joining after Brexit, **the EPP is now the only group represented in all 27 member states**. With proportionate growth in numbers and a gradual consolidation of policy positions, Christian-Democrats' role in the EP may evolve from being a part of the governing majority to

perhaps again leading on legislative work. However, the inherent divisions on some of the key issues, including the approach to the climate transition and the status of the Fidesz party of Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, will likely continue to haunt the centre-right grouping.

S&D – A CHANCE TO CONSOLIDATE

With the departure of the large Labour delegation, including Vice-Chairs of ENVI and CULT committees, the S&D will face a net-loss of 6 seats. They will be joined by new MEPs from Croatia, France, Romania and Spain, further re-enforcing the largest delegation. **Despite the drop in numbers, proportionally the representation of the S&D increased post-Brexit.** Without the traditionally more business-friendly British MEPs, **the group may push for a more progressive agenda.**

RE – DOUBLE-EDGED FRENCH DOMINANCE

The success of the “Remainers” in the UK last May meant the Brexit hit the Renew Europe hard, with the net-loss of 11 deputies. Out of the six new MEPs, two come from France (other four are from Netherlands, Ireland, Spain and Denmark), further increasing the dominance of President Macron’s delegation. With the departure of the only other double-digit delegation, **the French contingent in RE now comprises almost a quarter of the Group with 24 members**, with the second-largest Spanish delegation numbering 9 MEPs. With such a dominance of the French delegation, it is possible a fragile and fragmented newly formed group may struggle to maintain voting discipline on important issues.

ID – GROUP’S GROWTH, BUT A BLOW TO SOVEREIGNTIST

Identity and Democracy is the **only group to grow aside from the EPP**, benefitting from three new MEPs (Italy, France and the Netherlands) and no departing Brits. Growing in numbers, the Italian Lega delegation may grow more anxious after being ostracised in the EP and paralysed from any effective work and potentially search for other destinations in the Parliament. However, despite the growth of the ID group, including the return of the former ENF Chair Marcell de Graaff of the Dutch PVV, **the total number of sovereigntists decreased on 1 February with the departure of the Brexit Party delegation**, who had remained unattached since July.

GREENS/EFA – DWINDLING DILEMMA

Just as in the case of the RE, **Greens/EFA have lost their second-largest delegation for the second biggest net loss of seven MEPs in total.** Their new members come from green parties in Finland, France and Sweden. Dwindling numbers caused the Greens/EFA to **drop to the fifth place in size (after ID)**, and this may lead to a **dilemma for them in deciding how to react to the approaches of the Italian anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and their 14 MEPs**, who had been aiming to join the group last summer, but remained non-attached. The 5 Stars inclusion would put the Greens back among the top four groups, closing the gap with RE. At the same time, it would bring in some additional policy differences in a group already consisting of ecologists, regionalists, independentists, and Pirates. It **would also slightly disrupt the total dominance of the German green delegation** which comprises more than a third of the group.

ECR – POLISH DOMINANCE

The Conservatives are set to revert to the number of seats they won in May, with the departure of the four Tories and arrival of as many new MEPs – from Italy, Poland, Spain and The Netherlands (though the latter is uncertain, as she decided to leave the ECR member party since the elections). However, with the four Brexit Party MEPs joining the ECR during the first six months of this mandate, the group lost four seats compared to the January count. **The Polish delegation now accounts for more than 40% of the group**, which is an unprecedented dominance of a delegation in a EP group. With PiS being the governing party which brought Poland under the scrutiny of the EU and losing a small, yet respected UK Tory delegation, the ECR will struggle to gain legislative prominence. ECR and may try to court the likes of the Italian Lega and the Austrian Freedom Party (both ID) in an attempt to further grow and perhaps gain some traction based on the numbers.

GUE/NGL – SURGE OF SINN FEIN

Nothing much will change for the left-wing group in the EP. In fact, the biggest change for GUE/NGL related to Brexit was the success of their Irish member party Sinn Fein, which surged in national elections on 8 February to a virtual tie with the two traditional mainstream parties.

NI – 5 STARS' UNCLEAR FUTURE

With the departure of the Brexit Party, **the 5-Star Movement remains lonesome as a serious political force outside the group structures**. It is a governing party in the third largest EU member state and its 14 MEPs would be a substantial addition to any Group. Greens/EFA remain the most likely destination.

27 POST-BREXIT MEPS

Following the trends from the May elections, **a vast majority of the 27 incoming MEPs are first-time Euro-deputies. Only five of them served as Members previously**, with one former observer MEP. **However, among them there are some heavy-hitters**, notably Sandro Gozi, the only Italian in the Renew Europe (elected on the Renaissance list), Riho Terras, the former Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, or the former MEP and Co-President of the European Green Party Thomas Waitz.

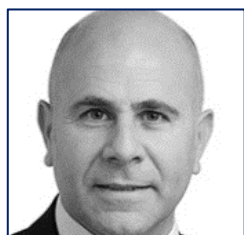
Below, we present you the 27 new MEPs, per political group.

EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (EPP)



Deirdre Clune (Ireland, Fine Gael)

Clune was elected in the Ireland South constituency, where both she and party colleague Seán Kelly managed to keep their seats in Brussels. During the 2014-19 mandate, Clune served as a member of TRAN and a substitute in EMPL, and was particularly active on travel issues. She served two terms in the national legislature (succeeding her father, a former deputy leader of Fine Gael) before serving as Lord Mayor of Cork and later coming to Brussels in 2014.



Salvatore De Meo (Italy, Forza Italia)

Since 2003, De Meo has been a Citizen Coordinator for Forza Italia and has also been a member of the Provincial Directorate of the Province of Latina. He served as the mayor of Fondi, which has a population of around 40,000, from 2010 to 2015. In 2015, following a proposal from the Italian Government, he was appointed as member of the European Committee of the Regions, joining the EPP, and becoming a member of the ECON and NATO Committees.



Miriam Lexmann (Slovakia, KDH)

Despite being a newly elected MEP, Lexmann is a veteran of the Brussels centre-right political scene, with more than a decade of experience in the “Bubble”. Before being elected an MEP, she served as the Director of the EU Office of the International Republican Institute, linked with the Republican Party. Prior to this, she served as the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Parliament to the EU. She holds a degree in philosophy and English language and with a wealth of experience in foreign affairs, she will likely be among the important actors in transatlantic relations.



Riho Terras (Estonia, Isamaa)

Riho Terras is an Estonian Army General and former Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces. With a background in History, he completed his Masters in Political Science in Munich, Germany. Terras spent much of his career in military, among other serving in NATO corps in Iraq. He was the Estonian Defence Attaché in Germany and Poland and briefly served as the Chief of the General Staff in 2011. In 2018, he founded a tech company specialized in unmanned ground systems and autonomous warfare, and is an advocate for robotics and new technologies.



Gabriel Mato Adrover (Spain, Partido Popular)

Mato graduated in law from the Autonomous University of Madrid and soon started working as a legal consultant. Since then, he has been a councillor of the municipality of Santa Cruz de La Palma, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of the Canary Islands Government, and a national and regional deputy. An MEP since 2009, he has served as the Chair of PECH committee, Vice-Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Countries of Central America, as well as a member of the ECON committee.

SOCIALISTS & DEMOCRATS (S&D)



Romana Jerković (Croatia, SDP)

Jerković is a medical doctor and a doctor of Philosophy in Biomedical Science. She has served as Member of the Croatian Parliament from 2011 and as the observer in the European Parliament 2012-2013. She has been one of the most active MPs on health issues and foreign and security policy in Croatian Parliament. Jerković has been the chair of the board of a thalassotherapy rehabilitation centre and several other medical centres in Croatia. In 2009, she was awarded the Commendatore medal by the Italian President.



Nora Mebarek (France, Parti Socialiste)

Ms. Mebarek is a member of the Social Party’s national bureau, which oversees its direction and administration. Prior to joining the European Parliament, she was a municipal councillor in the city of Arles and worked in the regional council of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (PACA) region before becoming first secretary of the Socialist party in the Bouches-du-Rhône department. She is expected to join the Parliament’s Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) and Committee on Fisheries (PECH).



Victor Negrescu (Romania, Social-Democratic Party)

Negrescu has been MEP between 2014 and 2017 and Minister Delegate for European affairs in the Romanian government between 2017 and 2018. As MEP he served as member of the BUDG and as a substitute of both the ITRE and JURI committees. As a Minister Delegate for European Affairs, Negrescu coordinated the preparation of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. He is a staunch supporter of the European digital sector and IT entrepreneurs.



Marcos Ros Sempere (Spain, PSOE)

He graduated in architecture at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and was a member of the administration at the municipality of Cartagena. He was a city councillor for the city of Murcia between 2003 and 2011. During the last decade, he was a lecturer at the Higher Technical School of Architecture and Building of the Polytechnic University of Cartagena. In 2016, he became Vice Chancellor of the University responsible for sustainability.

RENEW EUROPE (RE)



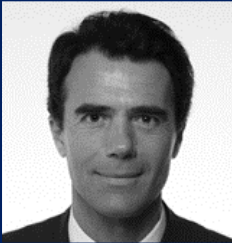
Barry Andrews (Ireland, Fianna Fáil)

A member of one of Ireland’s most prominent political families – always in the Fianna Fáil camp – his father David served in numerous cabinet posts in the 1990s/2000s, his uncle Niall was an Irish MP and MEP, and his cousin Ryan Tubridy is Ireland’s highest-paid TV presenter. Andrews served in the national Parliament (2002-11), and as Minister of State for Children from 2008-11. The main elements of his policy platform are smart cities, consolidation of tech leadership, and “Digital Responsibility” (especially cybersecurity, and elimination of barriers to the Digital Single Market).



Ilana Cicurel (France, La République en Marche)

Ms. Cicurel is a lawyer specialised in literary property and publishing rights. She has worked as a journalist and used to teach law at the Paris I University. In 2008, she joined the Alliance Israélite Universelle – an international organization founded to safeguard the human rights of Jews around the world – where she worked in the areas of education, culture and lifelong learning before becoming the Director. She is a member of La République en Marche’s Executive Bureau.



Sandro Gozi (France, La République en Marche)

Gozi is the President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF), an organisation founded shortly after the Second World War which supports a federal Europe. He was a member of the Italian Parliament and the Under-Secretary for European Affairs in the office of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi (2014-2018). He worked for almost a decade in the European Commission, including in the cabinet of former Commission President Romano Prodi. For the 2019 European elections, Gozi joined the list of Emmanuel Macron’s La République en Marche. He has publicly called for a two-speed Europe that would allow member states wanting closer integration to move forward more easily.



Bart Groothuis (Netherlands, VVD)

Groothuis will be joining the delegation of the governing Dutch VVD in the Renew Group after Liesje Schreinemacher pipped him to fourth place on the list last year. After more than a decade in the Ministry of Defence and over five of these as Head of the Office of Cyber Security, Groothuis will likely focus his efforts in the Parliament on the Security and Defence and ITRE Committees. He studied Economics and History at Radboud University.



Linea Søgaaard-Lidell (Denmark, Liberal Party)

Søgaaard-Lidell is no stranger to European politics. She worked in the Danish Permanent Representation in Brussels before and during the Danish Presidency in 2012. She has been a communications adviser in the Danish state-owned venture capital and investment growth fund – Vækstfonden. She has an academic background in journalism, European studies and did an Erasmus exchange in Maastricht



Adrián Vázquez Lázara (Spain, Ciudadanos)

Vázquez has been a coordinator of the international and European activities of Ciudadanos. He has contributed to the incorporation of the party into the ALDE Group and to the formation of the Renew Europe Group. Specialized in international affairs, he has been serving as chief of staff of the Citizens’ Delegation at Eurochamber. He previously worked in different organizations such as the OSCE, NATO and the Korean Trade Agency, and was an advisor to the former Foreign Affairs Minister, Ana Palacio (2002-2004). He has also worked as a Public Affairs consultant.

IDENTITY & DEMOCRACY (ID)



Marcell de Graaff (Netherlands, PVV)

The last on the list of incoming Dutch MEPs, de Graaff returns to the European Parliament after a brief spell away, having served as leader of the Party for Freedom Delegation and Co-Chair of the Europe of Nations and Freedom Group (ENF) in the previous mandate. The likelihood is therefore that he will join the Identity and Democracy group following the disbanding of the ENF. With a doctorate in theology, de Graaff concentrated his efforts on foreign relations during his previous term in Parliament.



Jean-Lin Lacapelle (France, Rassemblement National)

Lacapelle has been a member of the National Rally since 1980 and is a long-time friend and supporter of Marine Le Pen. Prior to becoming MEP, he was an adviser at the Centre-Val de Loire regional parliament and an adviser in the Ile-de-France region. He held senior positions within several large industrial groups such as Danone and Cadbury, working in sales. In 2016, he left his position as Sales Director at L'Oréal to work full time with the National Rally.



Vincenzo Sofo (Italy, Lega)

Born in 1986, Sofo has been an active member of Lega since 2009. To support Lega's goals, he founded the online "think tank" 'The Taliban', a far-right discussion website, mainly dealing with immigration-related topics and Italian foreign policy. It has been considered to have played an important role when it comes to Lega's propaganda. He is a graduate in Economics and Public Sector Policies.

GREENS/EFA



Alviina Alametsä (Finland, Green League)

Alametsä is a 27-year-old member of the Green League who served as a city councillor in Helsinki where she chaired the equality committee. She worked as a project leader for *Mielenterveyspooli*, a Finnish mental health network which includes 32 organisations. After completing her studies in political sciences, Alametsä worked at the Crisis Management Initiative, a Finnish conflict resolution NGO, and as an assistant to Pekka Haaviston (Green League) in the Finnish Parliament.



Jakob Dalunde (Sweden, Green Party)

Now coming to Brussels as an MEP for the second time, during the previous mandate Dalunde served as a member of the ITRE Committee, as well as an active substitute member of the Transport Committee. In these capacities his focus was on energy and he served as rapporteur for a report on the governance of the energy union. Prior to his election as an MEP, he was a Member of the Swedish Parliament and defence policy spokesman for the domestic Green Party from 2014-16. Before entering politics, he worked at the Swedish Engineers' Union and was involved in Swedish church politics.



Claude Gruffat (France, Europe Écologie)

The son of a farmer, Gruffat is a businessman and entrepreneur who ran on Yannick Jadot's common list of "Écologie Les Verts", the Independent Ecologist Alliance, and "Régions et Peuples Solidaires", a French political federation of regionalist parties. For fifteen years, he was the CEO of Biocoop, a company with more than 500 stores across France specializing in the commercial distribution of eco-friendly and fair-trade food products and cosmetics. He has advocated against both the EU-Canada and EU-Mercosur free trade agreements and for a sustainable agriculture.



Thomas Waitz (Austria, The Green Alternative)

Waitz is a returning MEP and the newly elected Co-Chair of the European Green Party. He is an organic farmer and one of his main topics relates to the protection of small farms. Waitz served in the previous mandate of the European Parliament following the resignation of Ulrike Lunacek. He succeeded her in her roles related to the Western Balkans, but his main activities were in the AGRI committee and the special committee on pesticides where he was shadow rapporteur on the future of food and farming report and focussed on animal welfare.

EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES AND REFORMISTS (ECR)



Sergio Berlato (Italy, Fratelli d'Italia)

Berlato has been an MEP from 2000 to 2014, sitting first with the Union of Europe for the Nations (UEN), and then with the EPP Group. During his last mandate, he was a member of the ENVI committee and of the EP delegation with the US. During his first mandate in the EP, he was very active in the AGRI Committee, in which he served as a Vice-Chair. He served as regional Agriculture minister in Veneto where he was elected as a member of the Hunting Fishing Environment list and has been an advocate for hunters.



Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (Spain, Vox)

Prior to her political career, she has worked both as neuropsychologist and as a pharmaceutical researcher. She joined Vox and was a candidate for the Senate in 2016 but was not elected. She is known for her pro-life beliefs and deep-rooted Christian ideology. A graduate in pharmacology at the Complutense University in Madrid, de la Pisa completed her academic path with a master degree in Neuropsychology and Education at the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja.



Dominik Tarczyński (Poland, Law and Justice)

Tarczyński began his professional career in the UK, as a radio talk-show host for a Christian programme. During that period, he also became the assistant of a Christian exorcist. Between 2009 and 2010, he was director of the regional TVP3 Kielce and later deputy director of operations at the TVP's Information and Telecommunications Centre. In 2015, he was elected as an independent candidate during the Polish general election and became a member of the governing PiS party. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration of the Catholic University of Lublin.

UNKNOWNNS



Clara Ponsatí i Obiols (Spain, Together for Catalunya, Greens/EFA?)

Between 1988 and 2016, Mrs. Ponsatí i Obiols has worked as a researcher and then a professor of economics in several Spanish and non-Spanish universities, including the universities of Georgetown, Minnesota and Toronto. Ponsatí started her political career in 2016, when she joined the "Together for Catalunya" party and the national secretariat of Catalan National Assembly. In July 2017, she became a member of the regional government of Carles Puigdemont, in which she was responsible for education. She was among the five members of the Catalan government who escaped Spanish detention fleeing to Belgium.



Dorien Rookmaker (Netherlands, Independent, ECR?)

Rookmaker was fourth on the FvD candidate list last year, thereby entitling her to the first Dutch 'Brexit seat.' However, she has since left the party, meaning it is unclear which group she would be sitting with, notably as she was previously a member of the liberal party D66. She has been a member of the Dutch Senate since June 2019. Before that she worked in the insurance and banking industries. She studied political science at Leiden, and Policy and Governance in International Organisations in Groningen.