



# 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS



EU ANALYSIS



SUMATRA

I N N O V A T I O N



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## Introduction

A month ago, between 6 and 9 June 2024, we, European citizens, voted for the new 720 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), 15 more than in 2019. This presented the opportunity to reshape European dynamics by electing members who share our ideas, work on our priorities, and address our concerns. Five years after the 2019 elections, the European Union (EU) finds itself in a difficult situation. After having had to cope with Brexit, the EU had to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, protect the principles of the rule of law and democratic values that have been undermined by the actions of certain Member States such as Poland or Hungary, face corruption scandals like Quatargate, compromising transparency and trust, manage migration, deal with the climate crisis, and recover from the economic and energy crises caused by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. These difficult years, during which the EU has had its ups and downs, have revealed certain weaknesses and inconsistencies. Social disparities and

economic uncertainties persist in many EU countries, while migration remains a hot and controversial topic. Although the implementation of the Green Deal has slowed down and is encountering resistance from many crucial players, the EU is working on a Green Deal 2.0. Economic relations with China are fragile and the EU is working to remedy its dependence in strategic sectors. The rise of populist and nationalist parties in the European Union is also contributing to tensions within the EU and calling into question its legitimacy and unity. It is in this complex geopolitical landscape that the European elections took place last June, highlighting their importance for the future of the European Union and its member states.

The objective of this article is to understand the results of the 2024 European elections. With the Right coming out as the winner, many questions and concerns are being raised. What consequences will a right-oriented European Parliament (EP) have on migration and climate change policies? How will it influence the European vision for



enlargement, as well as EU's cohesion and integration efforts? How will the trade relations with China and the US evolve? Will this be a turning point for the EU's position regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict? Is there a risk of political instability and polarization within member states? However, it is too early to try answering such questions, which would only produce speculations. The aim is therefore to provide an overview of the election results, analyze potential implications based on current political trends, and help readers understand possible future directions for the European Union. Firstly, this article explains the system of proportional representation in the EP, in order to understand the election mechanism and the relationship between national political parties and European political groups. Next, the results of the elections will be presented and then used to understand the implications of this shift of power. Finally, the main points of contention within the political sphere will be discussed, as well as the next important dates for the future of the European Union.





## Election Mechanism and Representation in The Parliament

The European Parliament is composed of MEPs from all 27 EU countries. The number of seats per country is distributed in proportion to a country's population, with the maximum number of seats being 96, and the minimum 6. In fact,

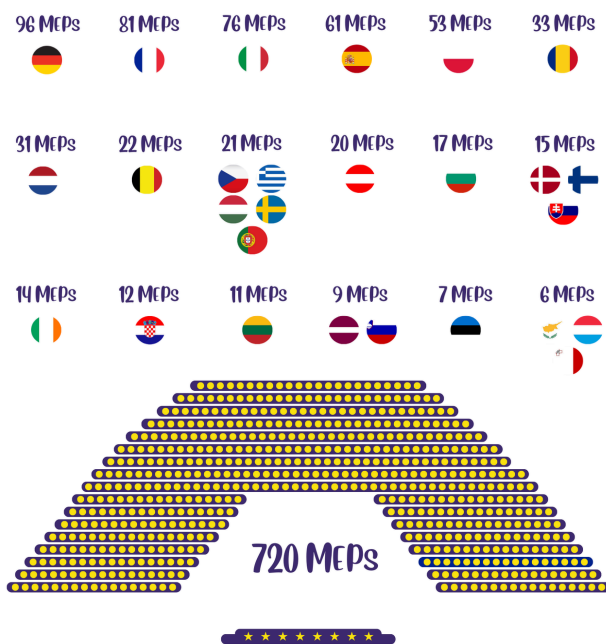


Figure 1: MEPs per Country

Germany has the maximum number of seats as it is the most populous country with over 83 million citizens <sup>1</sup>, while Malta, with its 536,000 citizens, has the minimum number of seats <sup>2</sup>.

The seats allocated to a Member State are then shared among the different national parties, which is determined by the number of votes obtained during the European elections. The more votes, the more seats. National parties are affiliated to one of the seven European political groups, based on MEPs' political affinities. In order to form a European political "family", there should be a minimum of 23 MEPs, elected in at least one quarter of the EU's Member States (currently seven). If one of the two conditions is not met, then the Members will be part of the "non-attached" Members. The major political groups in the hemicycle are the European People's Party (EPP), also known as the "Christian-Democrats", and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), and Renew Europe, called the "Liberals" <sup>3,4</sup>.

(1) Worldometer. (2024). Germany Population. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/germany-population/>  
(2) Worldometer. (2024). Malta Population. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/malta-population/>  
(3) European Parliament. (2024). The Political Groups of the European Parliament. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/political-groups>  
(4) Statista. (2024). Seats won in European Parliament Elections from 1979 to 2024, by party grouping. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1381483/european-parliament-elections-seats-won-party-group/>



Together, they formed a three-group majority (414 MEPs for 2019-2024), as they were accounting for more than half of MEPs, matching the simple majority voting rule ( $703/2 + 1 = 353$  MEPs). This helped them to influence EU policies according to their political ideas, allowing them to take less account of the opinions of the other four groups.

Let us take Belgium as an example. In June 2019, Belgian citizens voted for 21 Belgian MEPs, one less than this June 2024. Over the past five years, there have thus been 21 MEPs from Belgium, from the various Belgian national parties. In the European

Parliament, the Left consisted of the Belgian Labour Party (PTB), "Ecolo" & "Groen", and the Socialist Party (PS) & "Vooruit", affiliated to The Left, The Greens/EFA, and the S&D, respectively. In the center were the "Mouvement Reformateur" (MR) & OpenVLD, affiliated to Renew Europe. Finally, the "Christlich Soziale Partei" (CSP) & "Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams" (CD&V) & "Les Engagés", "Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie" and the "Vlaams Belang" formed the "right", affiliated to the EPP, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), and Identity & Democracy (ID), respectively.

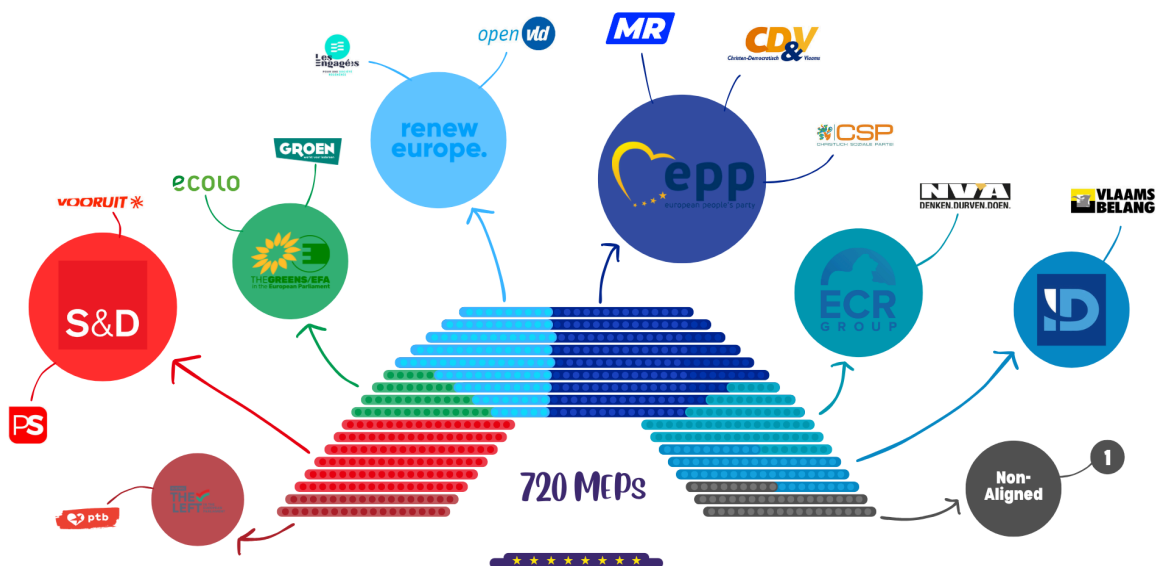


Figure 2: Political Groups in the European Parliament



Now, this is the representation of Belgian political parties only. Adding the parties from the other 26 Member States, that's what the European Parliament is really made up of. For example, for the period 2019-2024, the EPP, which is the largest European group, was made up of 50 national parties. Conversely, The Left was made up of 20 national parties. As a result, this system of proportional representation, while offering advantages, also presents certain challenges and controversies.

This system, while offering advantages, also presents certain challenges. Proportional representation promotes fairness and equity, as it reduces disproportionate representation by making it possible to represent a wider range of political opinions, especially those of smaller and minority groups. Consequently, it would give a sense that all votes count, pushing for voter turnout. Another advantage is that, through collaboration and debates, it allows greater flexibility, adapting more easily to changes in public opinion and enabling innovative political solutions. In contrast, the diversity of national parties fragments the

political landscape. Forming coalitions can be a complex task, potentially leading to gridlock on important and urgent issues. And even when coalitions are formed, it can be difficult to reach agreements between national parties, due to their different agendas or diverging national interests. To find common ground, national parties have to compromise, which can lead to incoherent, ineffective and/or fragmented policies that do not fully address the issues at stake. Overall, proportional representation enhances the legitimacy of the democratic process and strengthens Europe's sense of unity, identity and integrity. However, consensus requirements lead to lengthy negotiations that slow down the legislative process and delay political objectives.



## 2024 European Elections Results

So, now that we went over how the representation within the European Parliament works, this article will discuss the results of the 2024 European elections, and explain who “won” and who “lost”.

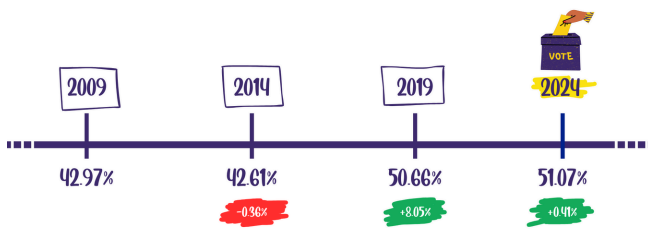


Figure 3: General Turnout since 2009

It is important to note that the results of the 2024 EU elections used in this article are provisional results, as Member States have yet to officially publish their final national turnout data.

After a significant increase in the number of voters in 2019 (+8.05%), the 2024 European elections saw only a small growth of 0.41%<sup>5</sup>. This small average percentage indicates that there has been little improvement. While Belgium (+1.45%), France (+1.37%), Malta (+0.3%), Latvia (+0.29%) and

Romania (+1.20%) saw a substantial increase, 8 other countries recorded a rise of at least 3%. These included Hungary (+16.1%), Slovakia (+11.64%) and Slovenia (+12.91%), which had recorded low turnouts in previous European elections. However, other countries such as Greece (-17.29%), Spain (-11.52%) and Lithuania (-25.13%) saw a significant drop in turnout, while turnout in Finland (-0.4%) and Sweden (-1.88%) fell slightly. Like in 2019, 15 countries are still below the 50% turnout rate, including four that were above this rate in 2019. In 2019, however, four countries were below the 30% rate, compared with two in 2024. Furthermore, with the exception of Croatia (-8.5%) and Poland (-5.03%), turnout increased in the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

It can be assumed that turnout among young people has increased as, for the first time, Member States were allowed to set the national minimum age at 16 if they wished, which was the case in Austria, Belgium, Malta and Germany<sup>6</sup>.

(5) European Parliament. (2024). Turnout per Year. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/turnout/>

(6) European Parliament. (2023). Voting Age for European Elections. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/749767/EPRS\\_ATAG\(2023\)749767\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/749767/EPRS_ATAG(2023)749767_EN.pdf)





However, it is too early to accurately assess the youth participation or the reasons why people decided to vote or not to vote. As in 2014 and 2019, a

post-election survey will probably be published later in the year, around September, which will contain data useful for answering these points.

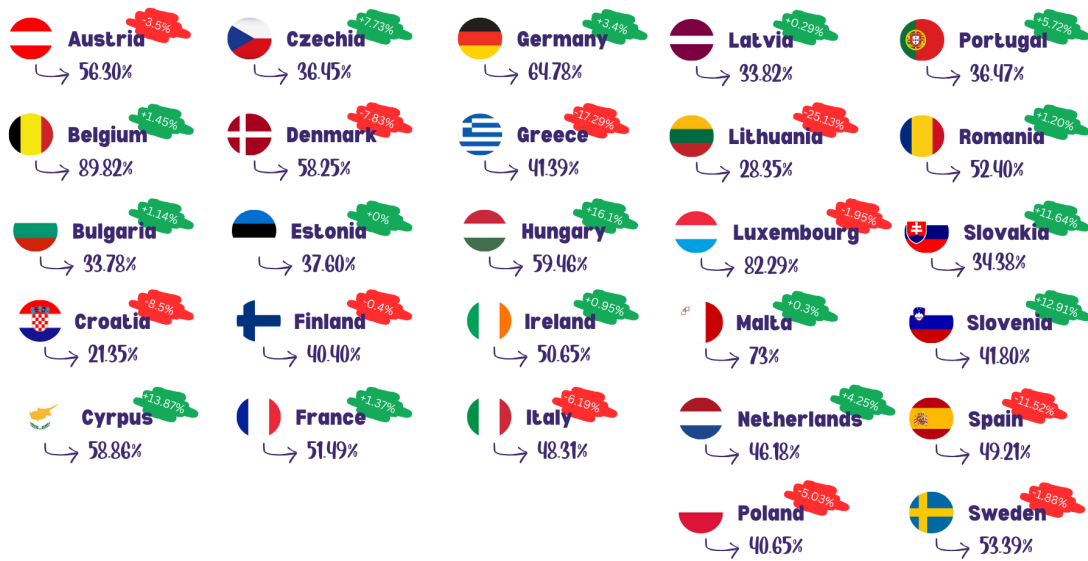


Figure 4: Turnout per Member State in 2024

Following the results of the 2024 European elections, two “losers” and two “winners” can be identified <sup>7, 8, 9, 10</sup>. The two groups losing the most are Renew Europe (-24) and the Greens (-17), and the two groups gaining the most seats are ECR (+15) and the EPP (+12). The ID group also

came out stronger, coming from the second-to-last place to the fifth. Finally, the Socialists and Democrats only lost 2 seats, while the Left obtained 2 additional seats. Undoubtedly, the Right has been strengthened, with a total of 329 seats (including the EPP), compared

(7) Europe Elects. (2024). European Parliament Election 2024. <https://europeelects.eu/ep2024/>  
 (8) European Parliament. (2024). European Parliament 2024-2029. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/european-results/2024-2029/>  
 (9) European Parliament. (2024). Breakdown of national parties and political groups - 2024-2029. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/breakdown-national-parties-political-group/2024-2029/>  
 (10) European Parliament. (2024). Seats by political group and country - 2024-2029. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/seats-political-group-country/2024-2029/>



compared with 305 for the Left and Center. It is important to note, however, that there are still 41 newly elected MEPs who are not part of any political group and are expected to join one shortly, as well as a total of 45 independent MEPs.

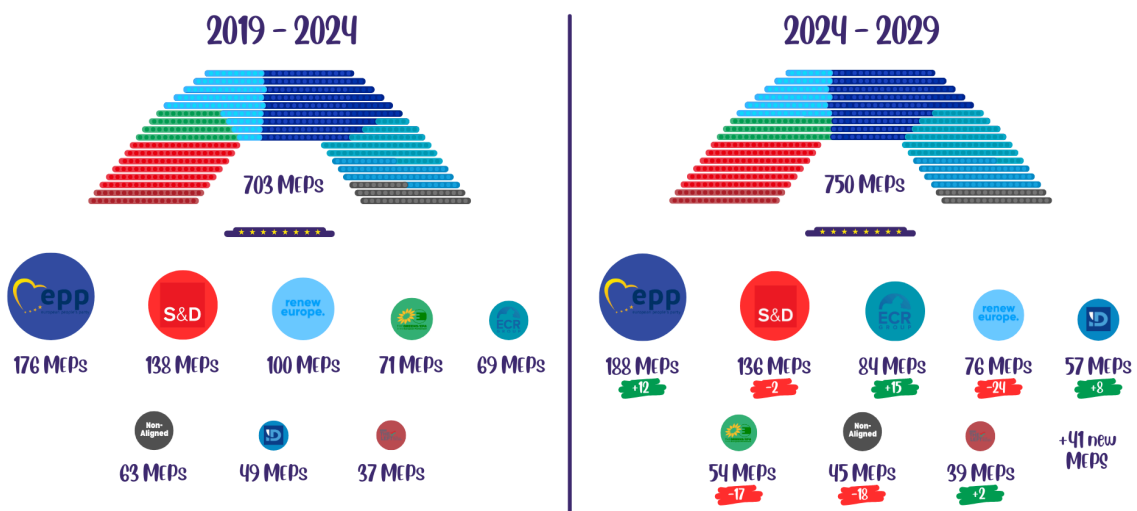


Figure 5: Comparison of MEPs per Political Group in 2019 and 2024



## Influence of the Right in the Parliament: Possible Scenarios

We know who the winners and losers are, but what does it all mean? What will really happen? The European elections are very important for the European Union. By forming coalitions or joining one of the seven current European groups, MEPs have a greater influence on the priorities of the Parliament's legislative agenda. Then, in collaboration with the Council of the EU, they amend and approve legislation proposed by the European Commission (EC), thus directly influencing political outcomes. MEPs also have a say in the EU budget, as they decide how much funding is allocated to programs such as research and development (R&D) or infrastructure projects. In addition, the composition of the Parliament has an impact on the EC President, whose political ideas are reflected in the Commission's agenda and policy proposals. Indeed, the President is elected by a qualified majority voting

(QMV), which means that to be elected, he or she must be supported by MEPs from at least 55% of EU countries (15/27) representing at least 65% of the EU population. So, will the results of the 2024 European elections enable the emergence of a new political majority in Parliament?

Given the rise of the Right, and the weakening of the Left and Center, there are two ways for the Right to be in the majority in the European Parliament. The first scenario is for the EPP to leave the coalition with the Socialists & Democrats and the Liberals, and turn towards the Conservatives (ECR). In fact, a few weeks before the EU elections, during the Maastricht Debate, the 29th of April 2024, the current President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen, who belongs to the EPP, did not rule out working with the Right, such as Meloni's party "Fratelli d'Italia"<sup>11</sup>. However, in response to that, on the 4th of May 2024, the Party of European Socialists held a conference in Berlin to make the "Democracy Declaration", warning that they will

(11) Wax, E. (2024). Von der Leyen opens the door to Europe's hard right. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/von-der-leyen-hard-right-maastricht-debate-giorgia-meloni-viktor-orban-schmit/>



not collaborate with the Right, namely ECR and ID <sup>12</sup>. A position shared by Valérie Hayer, President of Renew Europe, and by the Greens who said they were open to join a stable and democratic majority <sup>13, 14, 15</sup>. In view of these positions, and given that Ursula von der Leyen needs to create a supportive majority to be re-elected for a second term as President of the European Commission, it didn't take her long to clarify her remarks. She stressed the importance of continuing to collaborate with the Socialists and Liberals, as well as any other group willing to stand in the way of the extremes <sup>16, 17</sup>. Therefore, this first scenario of the EPP forming a new majority with the Right is unlikely to happen.

The second scenario is the creation of a far-right supergroup. ECR and ID parties such as Marine Le Pen's "Rassemblement national" (RN), André Ventura's "Chega", Geert

Wilders' Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) and others could work together to become the second largest group in the EP, with at least 141 seats. Nevertheless, the task is far from easy, as the far-right parties are often at odds on most issues. Their disagreements on enlargement policies, market regulation, trade agreements, EU industrial financing or the Russian-Ukrainian conflict are the result of profound ideological divisions. Because of these differences, the idea of creating an alternative group rather than merging into a supergroup has once again become an option. For example, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which has been excluded from the ID group by the end of May 2024, is seeking unaffiliated national parties to create a new European group in the European Parliament <sup>18</sup>. These parties, however, are being sidelined by everyone because they belong to far-right, Eurosceptic, populist, anti-establishment or

(12) PES. (May 4, 2024). PES Democracy Congress – “We stand together – for our Europe” / SPE-Demokratiekongress “Wir stehen zusammen – für unser Europa”. <https://pes.eu/event/pes-democracy-congress-we-stand-together-for-our-europe/>

(13) Rankin, J. (2024). Greens 'will not back von der Leyen' for re-election if she does deal with far right. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/29/greens-will-not-back-ursula-von-der-leyen-if-she-makes-deal-with-far-right>

(14) ENR. (2024). Valérie Hayer: European liberal leader rules out coalition with parties to the right of the EPP. <https://europeannewsroom.com/valerie-hayer-european-liberal-leader-rules-out-coalition-with-parties-to-the-right-of-the-epp/>

(15) Grieria, M. (2024). EU Socialists, Greens, Liberals warn von der Leyen: No to hard-right alliance. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/eu-socialists-greens-liberals-warn-von-der-leyen-no-to-hard-right-alliance/>

(16) Gray, A. et al. (2024). EU's von der Leyen seeks centrist allies after far-right election gains. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eus-von-der-leyen-seeks-centrist-allies-after-far-right-election-gains-2024-06-10/>

(17) Baccini, F. (2024). Von der Leyen wants “a bastion against left and right extremes.” But real problem is governments. EU News. <https://www.eunews.it/en/2024/06/10/von-der-leyen-wants-a-bastion-against-left-and-right-extremes-but-real-problem-is-governments/>

(18) Cantone, S. (2024). Super Poll: Could German AfD create a new alt-right group in the European Parliament? Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/2024/06/06/super-poll-could-german-afd-create-a-new-alt-right-group-in-the-european-parliament>





separatist parties. Therefore, although very difficult to achieve, the creation of such a group would encourage cooperation between the ECR and the ID. Another possibility involves Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary, and his Fidesz party. After it was officially announced that Orban's party will not join Giorgia Meloni's "Fratelli d'Italia" party in the ECR<sup>19</sup>, the Hungarian head of government has been looking for other ways to increase his influence on the European stage. A few weeks ago, on June 30, 2024, Orban traveled to Vienna to declare that his party would form a new group called "Patriots for Europe" together with the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and the Party of Discontented Citizens (ANO) of the Czech Republic<sup>20</sup>. He claimed that this new political group would bring change and transform European politics. Since then, there has been much speculation that the Polish nationalist party "Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS)" or Mateusz

Morawiecki's "Law and Justice Party" are considering leaving the ECR and allying with Viktor Orban<sup>21,22</sup>. Other parties from the Visegrad countries could also consider joining, such as the "Konfederacja" (Confederation) from Poland or the "Hnutie Republika" (Republican Movement) from Slovakia.

All in all, it appears that the right will be able to influence European policies by blocking proposals and demanding counter-proposals. This could change the nature of certain policies or delay their final adoption. For example, the Parliament has opted for a stance on migration policy (i.e.: new pact on migration and asylum) that reflects the position of the right-wing parties. Migration policy now focuses on bilateral agreements with third countries to prevent migrants from entering the EU, at the expense of the protection of human rights and increased border controls. Concerning climate policy, most of the measures included in the European Green Deal

(19) Baccini, F. (2024). Orbán closes to ECR after Romania's AUR ultra-nationalists join group in EU Parliament. EU News. <https://www.eunews.it/en/2024/06/20/orban-ecr-romania-aur-eu-parliament/>

(20) Euronews. (2024). Hungary's Orban announces plan to form new far-right bloc in European Parliament. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/06/30/hungarys-orban-announces-new-far-right-bloc-for-the-european-parliament>

(21) Wax, E. (2024). Poland's Law and Justice '50/50' about leaving Giorgia Meloni and joining forces with Viktor Orbán. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-law-and-justice-mateusz-morawiecki-giorgia-meloni-viktor-orban/>

(22) Monasse, T. (2024). Conservative ECR group on brink of split amid European Parliament turmoil. Brussels Signal. <https://brusselssignal.eu/2024/07/conservative-ecr-group-on-brink-of-split-amid-european-parliament-turmoil/>



package have already been adopted. Therefore, the right is trying to undermine proper implementation or oppose new legislation. There is strong opposition to the 90% reduction in carbon emissions by 2040 or to the Nature Restoration Act. The effectiveness of the Right in influencing these policies will depend mainly on its ability to work together and unite. This will be the opportunity to observe whether or not the nationalists can go against their nature by collaborating and forming pan-European coalitions. What's more, despite their 14 seats loss, the current majority, made of the S&D, Renew, and the EPP, will represent 400 seats in the European Parliament from 2024 to 2029. And even more likely if the Greens add their 54 seats. So, the three groups could still form the majority ( $750/2 + 1 = 376$  MEPs). So, the Right may have limited power in the European Parliament over the next five years. But what about outside the EP? What signal is it sending to the other EU institutions and to national governments?



## Future Direction For The European Union

The European Commission (EC) and the Council of the EU are the two other institutions mainly impacted by the rise of the Right in the Parliament. The EC is the legislative body of the European Union. It proposes legislation to the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission's work is guided by priorities, set by its President at the start of his or her five-year term. The current Commission President is Ursula von der Leyen, who belongs to the EPP and has successfully worked with the European Parliament's political majority (S&D, European Renewal and EPP) over the past five years. In recent weeks, there has been speculation that she might stand for a second term. It was only recently that EU leaders took the decision to nominate her as a candidate for Europe's highest office<sup>23,24</sup>. The next step is to secure the support of at least 55% of MEPs (361). This is why she is working hard to build a majority in the European Parliament,

made up of her own party (EPP), Renew Europe, S&D and the Greens (454 MEPs). As she cannot be sure that all the national parties in the European group will vote for her, she needs to build a majority with as many seats as possible. By including the Greens in her majority, she thus gives herself a wider margin. She has also forged ties with Meloni, but his "Fratelli d'Italia" party within the ECR is considered too "right-wing" by centrist and left-wing parties. And as the Greens, S&D and Renew have made it clear that they will not work with the right, it could be risky for von der Leyen to maintain relations with Meloni, as she might not be supported by MEPs from these groups. Her election is scheduled for next Thursday, July the 18th<sup>25</sup>.

The Council of the EU is made of national government ministers who decide the policy agenda and adopt EU laws with the EP. As observed, right-wing parties have collected a large number of voices, meaning that the composition of national governments may also shift to the right. In some countries, such as

(23) Brzozowski, A., Pignet, A. (2024). EU leaders expected to agree on Von der Leyen, top jobs despite lingering resistance. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/eu-leaders-expected-to-agree-on-von-der-leyen-top-jobs-despite-lingering-resistance/>

(24) Rankin, J., Bayer, L. (2024). EU leaders back Ursula von der Leyen for second term as president. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/27/ursula-von-der-leyen-wins-second-term-as-european-commission-president>

(25) European Parliament. (2024). Agenda. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda>



Italy, the Netherlands, or Sweden, the right is even part of governing coalitions. Ultimately, this will affect the composition and position of the Council. On top of that, Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Prime Minister, could make use of the Hungarian presidency of the Council, which started the 1st of July 2024 and will last for the next 6 months. With a slogan “Make Europe Great Again”, derived from one of Trump’s most famous sayings “Make America Great Again”, Orbán’s intention is clear, he wants to reshape an Europe that fits better at his image. And he could benefit from a golden opportunity. The six-months rotating presidency of the Council can influence the priorities of the EU by setting the priorities of the political agenda of the Council. Hungary decided to focus on 7 priorities such as tackling illegal migration, shaping the future of cohesion policy, bringing the common agricultural policy (CAP) at the heart of the discussion, or designing a coherent and merit-based enlargement policy.

Finally, because the right-wing is the big winner in democratic European



Source: X

Image 1: Hungarian Presidency of the Council

elections, it could therefore legitimately aim for key positions in the European decision-making process. The EU's key positions already have their official candidates, which makes them difficult to attain at present. For example, Roberta Metsola is expected to remain President of the Parliament, António Costa will be the next President of the European Council and Kaja Kallas will be the Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Needless to say, the right-wing was quite unhappy with this decision, as all three candidates belong to the EPP, S&D and Renewing Europe respectively. Consequently, as there is no right-wing candidate, it is very possible that they will lobby for a position





after the election of the Commission President. Influential right-wing parties could possibly seek a portfolio, for which a Commissioner is responsible, in policy areas such as immigration, energy, trade or the internal market.



## Conclusion

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The outcome of the 2024 European elections will bring about a change in European power dynamics, and not just within the European Parliament. With a more powerful right-wing, determined to act and influence policy as much as it can, we can expect delays in policy adoption and implementation, due to greater political polarization. The involvement of European citizens in these elections is of crucial importance. Every vote counts, as it influences national and European policies. The increase in turnout in some countries bears witness to citizens' desire to shape a Union that reflects their values and priorities. This is vital for the legitimacy and unity of the European Union.



# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AfD</b>	Alternative für Deutschland
<b>ANO</b>	Action for Dissatisfied Citizens
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CD&amp;V</b>	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams
<b>CSP</b>	Christlich Soziale Partei
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECR</b>	European Conservatives & Reformists
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FPO</b>	FreedomParty of Austria
<b>ID</b>	Identity & Democracy
<b>MEPs</b>	Members of the European Parliament
<b>MR</b>	Mouvement Réformateur
<b>PiS</b>	Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc
<b>PS</b>	Parti Socialiste
<b>PTB</b>	Parti Travailleux Belge
<b>PVV</b>	Partij voor de Vrijheid
<b>QMV</b>	Qualified Majority Voting
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research & Development
<b>RN</b>	Rassemblement National
<b>S&amp;D</b>	Socialists and Democrats



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**Figure 4: Turnout per Member State in 2024**

**Figure 5: Comparison of MEPs per Political Group in 2019 and 2024**

**Image 1: Hungarian Presidency of the Council**





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# SUMATRA

I N N O V A T I O N

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July 11, 2024