EU Centre Background Brief
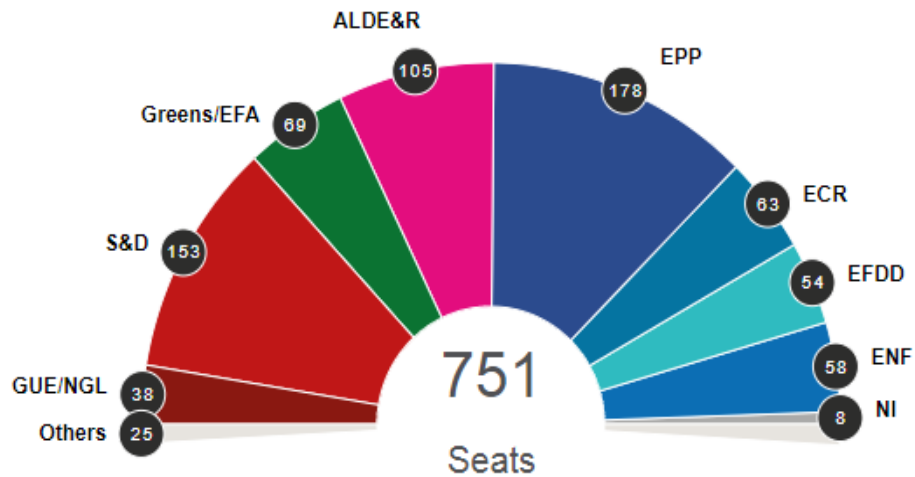### 30th May 2019

Results of EU Parliamentary Elections 2019

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European Parliament: 2019-2024
Provisional results

ALDE&R 105

Greens/EFA 69

EPP 178

S&D 153

ECR 63

EFDD 54

GUE/NGL 38

ENF 58

Others 25

NI 8

751 Seats

Legend

EPP – Group of the European People's Party

S&D – Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists Group

ALDE&R – Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe + Renaissance + USR PLUS

GUE/NGL – Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left

Greens/EFA – Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

EFDD – Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group

ENF/EAPN – Europe of Nations and Freedom Group/ European Alliance of People and Nations

NI – Non-attached Members

Others – Newly elected Members not allied to any of the political groups set up in the outgoing Parliament

Latest results as at 29 May, 12:06am (GMT+8)
(Image source: European Parliament)

<u>Fast Facts about the European Parliament</u>

- The European Parliament is the only body in the European Union (EU) that is **directly elected** by voters in the EU bloc and elections take place every five years.

- The three key functions of the Parliament is passing EU legislation (**legislative**), supervising EU bodies such as the Commission (**supervisory**) and establishing the EU budget alongside the Council (**budgetary**).

- The EU Parliament decides EU laws and budget together with the Council. It exercises democratic supervision over the Union and in particular over the European Commission. At any time, Parliament can dismiss the whole Commission by adopting a motion of censure. This requires a two-thirds majority. Parliament also supervises the day-to-day management of EU policies by putting oral and written questions to the Commission and the Council. The European Parliament must also approve with an absolute majority vote regarding the decision to allow a candidate country to join the EU.

- The Parliament can reject the proposed budget, and it has already done so on several occasions. When this happens, the entire budget procedure has to be restarted. By using its budgetary powers, Parliament exercises considerable influence over EU policymaking.

- There are a total of 751 seats allocated in parliament (including the president), however the total number of seats will drop to 705 after the UK officially leaves the EU, with some seats being reallocated to current under-represented members (see below)

- Seats allocations are degressively proportional to the size of each member country's population - minimum of 6 and maximum of 96 Members of European Parliament (MEPs) per country.

- Members of the European Parliament and members of national Parliaments of Member States often work closely together. Since 2009, the EU Treaty has defined the role of national parliaments in the EU. They can express their opinions on all new laws proposed by the Commission and thereby ensure that the principle of subsidiarity is followed. This principle states that the EU should only deal with a subject when action at European level is more efficient than at national or regional levels.

- There are eight main pan-European groups under which parties organise:
    - **European People's Party (EPP)** – Centre-right
    - **Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)** – Centre-left
    - **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) - Renaissance** – Liberal Democracy
    - **European Alliance of People and Nations (EAPN/ENF)** – Far-right
    - **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)** - Conservative

- o **The Greens/European Free Alliance** – Green
- o **European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)** – Green left
- o **Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD**) – Anti-establishment
  (Sources: European Parliament, Financial Times, Politico Europe)

At a Glance: the 2019 Elections Results & their Implications

The center-right group known as the European People's Party (EPP) and the center-left Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) held 54% of the seats before the vote, but are now down to 43%. The two blocs together lost more than 70 seats and while they still emerged as the two biggest groups in this election, their collective numbers fail to make up a majority in Parliament and is their poorest performance since 1979.

The results suggest a more fragmented European Parliament in the coming term. They also suggest that European centrists will have to reach out to and unite more broadly with liberal coalitions in order to effect change — and maintain authority — in the EU. It could be due to the fact that voters often use the EU elections to give major parties a bloody nose, secure in the knowledge that it will not cause upheaval in their own national parliaments.
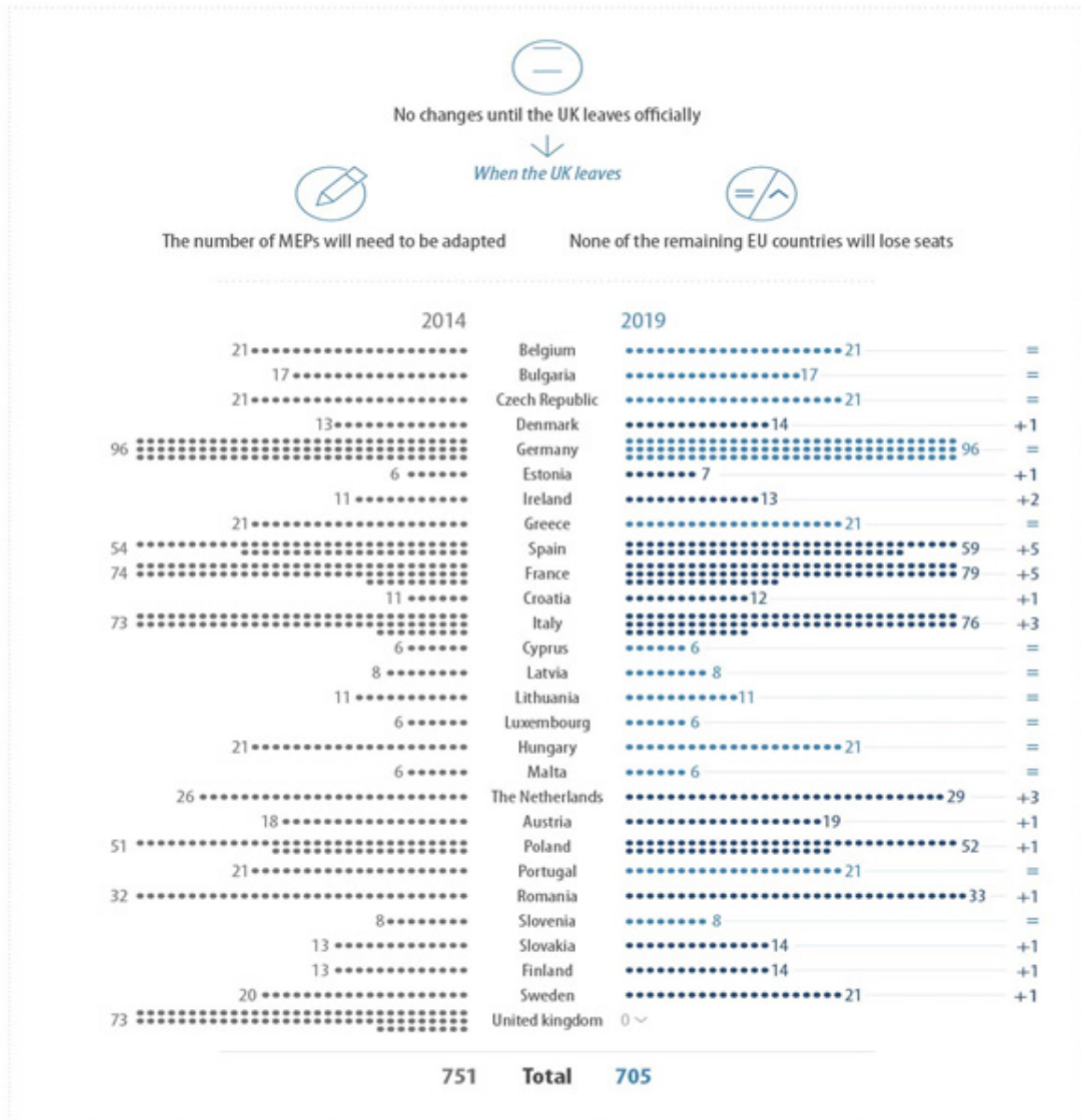
Populist Eurosceptic parties across Europe saw gains, but less than what some pre-election polls had anticipated. Populist parties such as Matteo Salvini's League party, Marine Le Pen's National Rally party and Nigel Farage's Brexit Party performed strongly in their respective countries, with 34%, 23.3% and 31.6% of the vote respectively. In spite of the gains made by these parties, it is unlikely that the Eurosceptic populist parties will be able to gain sufficient seats to form a third of the bloc and dominate Parliament, as previously envisioned.

The Green parties clinched some of the biggest wins. In Germany, they won 20% of the vote, double their 2014 results, placing second behind the Christian Democrats and Christian Socialists (CDU/CSU) alliance. The Green parties in France, Ireland, Netherlands and Belgium performed strongly and this "Green Wave" is expected to win the Greens close to 70 seats in Parliament. This wave comes on the back of months of demonstrations demanding action over climate change. "We will work tirelessly. For people. For Europe. For our planet!" the European Greens tweeted.

An election of firsts, this year also saw the first rise of voter turnout and was the highest in 20 years, with 50.5% of EU citizens having casted their votes. The highest national voter turnouts were in Belgium and Luxembourg, with close to 89% and 85% respectively.

European elections in 2019

How many seats will each country have?

No changes until the UK leaves officially

When the UK leaves

The number of MEPs will need to be adapted

None of the remaining EU countries will lose seats

	2014	Country	2019	
	21	Belgium	21	=
	17	Bulgaria	17	=
	21	Czech Republic	21	=
	13	Denmark	14	+1
	96	Germany	96	=
	6	Estonia	7	+1
	11	Ireland	13	+2
	21	Greece	21	=
	54	Spain	59	+5
	74	France	79	+5
	11	Croatia	12	+1
	73	Italy	76	+3
	6	Cyprus	6	=
	8	Latvia	8	=
	11	Lithuania	11	=
	6	Luxembourg	6	=
	21	Hungary	21	=
	6	Malta	6	=
	26	The Netherlands	29	+3
	18	Austria	19	+1
	51	Poland	52	+1
	21	Portugal	21	=
	32	Romania	33	+1
	8	Slovenia	8	=
	13	Slovakia	14	+1
	13	Finland	14	+1
	20	Sweden	21	+1
	73	United kingdom	0	

| 751 | **Total** | 705 |

europarl.eu

Source: European Parliament

Results for United Kingdom

As the UK government was unable to reach an agreement on their withdrawal from the EU and was granted an extension till 31 October, the UK participated in the 2019 EU Parliament elections and was allocated 73 seats. The main parties of interest in the running are:

- **Labour Party**: a centre-left party affiliated with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), led by Jeremy Corbyn

- **Conservatives and Unionist Party** ("Tories"): a centre-right party affiliated with the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), led by current Prime Minister Theresa May

- **Liberal Democrats:** a liberal party affiliated with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe & En Marche (ALDE + En Marche), led by Vince Cable

- **Brexit Party:** a newly-formed Eurosceptic party allied with Italy's Five Star Movement (M5S) in the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) and led by former UKIP leader Nigel Farage

- **Green Party:** a Green party affiliated with The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) led by Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley

- **Scottish National Party:** a centre-left party affiliated with The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) and led by Nicola Sturgeon

- **Change UK – The Independent Group:** a newly-formed, independent pro-EU party led by Heidi Allen

Other parties include: [United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), Party of Wales, Sinn Fein, Democratic Unionist Party, and Ulster Unionist Party](#)

Depending on when the official withdrawal from the EU is completed, elected UK members of parliament (MEP) may take up their roles from anywhere between a few weeks to a few months. [The current uncertainty over whether Brexit will happen requires the UK to stand for elections to prevent any lack of representation in the event the UK remains](#).

Nigel Farage's newly-formed Eurosceptic Brexit Party is the UK frontrunner party this election, claiming [31% of the vote and 29 seats](#). However, pro-Remain parties have also boasted considerable gains, with the Liberal Democrats party beating out Labour to come in second and the Green party winning 11% of the vote, [clinching an admirable 7 seats](#).

Both the Labour and Conservative party ("Tories") took a big hit, taking 14% and 9% of the votes respectively. The poor performance by the Tories were attributed to their inability to secure the promised Brexit as scheduled, a failure that has also led to the resignation of Prime Minister Theresa May. Labour's performance may have been a result of their inability to articulate a decisive stance on Brexit, a move which resulted in votes going to other Pro-Remain parties. The rough split between Pro-Leave and Pro-Remain faction is indicative of the polarizing nature of Brexit and speaks to the continued intractability of the issue.

Results for France

France was to send 79 deputies to sit as MEPs this election cycle, with 5 of those seats reallocated to the under-represented France as a result of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. UK's delay of Brexit means that of these 79 elected representatives, only 74 will immediately have seats in the European Parliament while 5 MEPs remain on the 'bench' awaiting the UK's official exit.

France's European election battle was being dominated by the domestic power struggle between Macron's centrist **La République en Marche** (or Republic on the Move) party and Marine Le Pen's far-right **Rassemblement National** (or National Rally) party, who were more or less neck and neck in the polls. The conservative **Républicains** (or Republicans) also made headway once more, thanks to their lead candidate François-Xavier Bellamy.

Macron's centrist party has environmental issues at the top of its European manifesto since polls reveal the climate crisis is a key concern for the French electorate. According to Viavoice's "Liberation" survey, 67% reported that that they believed the EU should be more active in leading the fight against global warming rather than nation-states. Another priority for French voters is "security", namely how the EU can protect citizens from a range of issues including globalisation, tech giants, the US and China, or from immigration. Although there are Eurosceptics on both the French left and right, voters largely stop short of a British-style appetite to leave the EU.

Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally won with 23.31% of the votes, beating French president Emmanuel Macron's La République En Marche alliance, which has 22.41%. While the result is a narrow margin of defeat for Macron, it was a far better performance than previous French presidential incumbents. **The Green Party, or EELV,** a Green centre-left political party in France led by Yannick Jadot, picked up 13.47% of the vote and the **Républicains** (or Republicans) led by François-Xavier Bellamy having 8.47% of the vote.

For Macron, the question that remains is whether his ambitions to lead in Europe will be dented by his second place in France. Despite his defeat by Le Pen, Macron is now a key player in the new ALDE-Renaissance force, whose performance makes it a key coalition partner in the new parliament. If ALDE-Renaissance is able to work cohesively, they may be a force to be reckoned with in the upcoming term.

Results for Germany

Germany is allocated 96 MEPs. The backdrop to the European elections campaigns is a phase of renewal as German parties attempt to reshape their distinctive profiles with the European election as an arena in which to observe these developments. Some of these parties are as follows:

- **Unionsparteien (or the Union)**: a centre-right Christian democratic political alliance between Chancellor Angela Merkel's **Christian Democratic Union (CDU)** and the **Christian Social Union (CSU)** in Bavaria.

- **Social Democratic Party (SPD):** Germany's biggest centre-left party, which adopted an EU electoral manifesto calling for EU-wide reforms to social security, taxation and migration policy.

- **Green Party:** a centre-left environmentalist party which has nearly doubled their share of the electoral vote

- **Alternative for Germany (AfD):** a Eurosceptic right-wing party founded in 2013, and normally focused on immigration policy. Its main appeal is its opposition to and complete rejection of Merkel's welcoming policy towards refugees. According to the party's environmental spokesperson, Karsten Hilsen, the party advocates for the continued use of fossil fuels in Germany's energy mix.

Source: Deutsche Welle

German voters in the European elections see climate change as their top concern, with immigration occupying the second spot in polls. As a result, climate activists have dubbed this the "climate election". This comes in the backdrop of a report that barring radical change, Germany will fall far short of its 2020 goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, a raft of environmental scandals has also damaged Germany's reputation as a global leader in climate protection.

Final results show that Merkel's conservative CDU-CSU alliance finished first with 28.9% of the vote, while the Greens and far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) made strong gains, finishing second and fourth with 20% and 11% of the vote respectively. This year, the Green Party alliance posted its strongest ever performance in the European elections, winning 69 seats and taking 9.19% of the vote, a huge increase from 2014 when they took 50 seats. The SPD had a poor showing according to the poll numbers, with a brutal decline of more than 11 percentage points from the previous European Parliament election.

The Green Party's strong performance could be attributed to the spike in youth votes, with 34% of 18-24-year-olds voting for the Greens. This demographic are more likely to be engaged and concerned with issues related to climate change, and the strong performance speaks to the priority placed on environmental issues. Commentator Alan Posener added that the Green Party's stylishly dishevelled leader Robert Habeck embodies what this generation would like Germany to be. The party now aims to use its newfound clout in a more fragmented Parliament to push its agenda of urgent climate action, social justice and civil liberties, leaders said.

Posener posits the main divide in Germany to be between on the one hand, young, urban, educated and upwardly mobile "globalists" (which can loosely be said to be represented by the Green Party) and on the other hand, older folk in sparsely populated and declining areas, who feel threatened and can be characterised bas representative of the nationalist AfD. The Christian Democratic Union led by Angela Merkel seems to be the only party that can bridge this gap since the CDU/CSU alliance won in all but 5 of 16 federal states. Germany's results seems exemplary of evidence of a new pluralism emerging in wider EU politics, including a Green and liberal surge. Natalie Nougayrède for the Guardian suggests that while "rightwing populism is still very much around", this does not imperil the EU's survival, nor "will it lead to a paralysis of its institutions". However, coalition-building does become trickier in the wager to maintain a balance between the far-right and the liberal and Green spectrum whilst remaining attractive to voters.

Results for Italy

Italy is allocated 73 seats in the election (76 had the UK not participated in the 2019 elections). In total, 8 parties are running for seats in the 2019 EU Parliament (EP) elections, with parties of interest including populist parties **La Lega** (or The League) and the **Five Star Movement (M5S),** led by Italian co-deputy Prime Ministers Matteo Salvini and Luigi di Maio respectively. Other parties fielding candidates include:

- **The Democratic Party (PD)**: a social-democratic party allied with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) and led by Nicola Zingerotti

- **Forza Italia (FI)**: a conservative party allied with the European People's Party (EPP) and led by ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi

- **Brother of Italy (FDL)**: a conservative party allied with the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and led by Giorgia Meloni

- **The Left (La Sinistra)**: a newly-formed left-leaning coalition allied with the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)

- **Federation of the Greens (Verdi):** a coalition of Green parties allied with The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)

- **More Europe (+E):** a centre-left, pro-EU party allied to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe & En Marche (ALDE + En Marche) led by Benedetto Della Vedova

Source: [Politico Europe](#), [The Local (Italy)](#)

Salvini's League party emerged as the [undisputed winner of the elections, procuring over a third of the Italian vote.](#) Following them is [centre-left PD with 22% of the vote and the M5S with 17%](#). Expected to place second in earlier polls, the poor performance by M5S stands in stark contrast to their performance in the 2018 Italian general election, which saw [M5S winning 32% of the vote while the League only obtained 17% of the vote](#).

Salvini had placed himself and the League at the forefront of a Eurosceptic, populist coalition in the elections. In early April, Salvini openly stated his plans to form an alliance with other Eurosceptic groups across Europe to form a significant bloc within the EP. Speaking in Milan alongside right-wing parties Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Danish People's Party and Finnish party True Finns, [Salvini outlined plans to unite Eurosceptic parties and institute change in parliament](#). Subsequently in mid-May, Salvini held a rally comprising 10 other right-wing populist European leaders in Milan, [reiterating his anti-immigration and anti-establishment views](#). While Salvini has performed well nationally, analysts note that his early ambitions of a dominant populist bloc seem unlikely this term. As at May 28 (8pm), the affiliated European Alliance of People and Nations (EAPN) (or ENF) will have an [estimated 73 seats in Parliament](#), a far cry from forming the majority bloc.

Several additional challenges stand in the way of Salvini's plans for a strong, decisive Eurosceptic bloc in parliament. [Eurosceptic groups have historically struggled to work cohesively and consistently in parliament](#). This is compounded by the ongoing corruption scandal that has hit the Austria Freedom Party and by extension, other European far-right parties, as former [vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache was filmed proposing public contracts in return for campaign support](#). Internally, rising tensions and disagreements in the ruling League-M5S coalition potentially challenge Salvini's support in Parliament. Despite the coalition agreement between the League and M5S in Italy, the two parties are running against each other in different blocs and have been [embroiled in domestic disagreements](#) over several issues.

About the EU Centre

Established in 2008, the EU Centre in Singapore was a joint project funded by the European Union (EU), the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the National University of Singapore (NUS). From 2017, the Singapore Management University (SMU) has also become a partner in contributing to the operations of the EU Centre. The EU is now a partnership of these three local universities.

The primary mission of the EU Centre is to promote knowledge and understanding of the EU, its policies and development of its relations with Singapore and Southeast Asia through research, publications and different outreach programmes.

The EU Centre is the Coordinator of a 3-year Jean Monnet Network grant (Sep 2016 – 2019). The Network comprising the EU Centre, University of Indonesia, University of Malaya and Maastricht University, will be jointly organising a series of programmes and activities tied to two research themes on Multiculturalism and Multilateralism.

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