



END OF THE STATUS QUO EUROPE ENTERS A MORE FRAGMENTED FUTURE

2019 EU PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
COUNTRY BY COUNTRY ANALYSIS

EXPERTS WITH IMPACT



INTRODUCTION

Within this report FTI Consulting Brussels provides an overview of the EU parliamentary elections held from 23rd May through to 26th May 2019, with a country by country analysis of all 28 Member States. All facts and figures are correct at time of publication with some results still to be declared. Within this introduction the team provides some highlights and overall insights.

A HIGHER TURNOUT PROVIDING ADDITIONAL LEGITIMACY

Since voting began in 1979, voter turnout has steadily declined from 63% overall to a mere 43% in 2014. With votes still being counted, final turnout for 2019 cannot yet be confirmed, but current estimates suggest this trend may finally be reversed with around 51% of eligible voters participating in these elections. The clear increase will be very much welcomed by democrats from across the political spectrum, in particular by the European Parliament itself. With the EU under closer scrutiny, it provides the institutions with increased legitimacy.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Over 400 million people were eligible to vote with a total of 751 seats being contested. As expected, the right of centre European People's Party (EPP) grouping in Parliament won the 2019 EU elections, securing 179 seats, down from 217 secured in 2014. The centre-left Socialists and Democrats (S&D) came second, securing 150 seats, down from 184.

The centrist progressive Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) saw a significant increase in numbers, rising from 69 to 107, with gains most notably coming from the UK and France, assuming President Macron's new La République en Marche (LREM) party decides to join forces with the established liberal group in the Parliament.

The Greens did also well, jumping from 52 to 70 MEPs, doubling their seats in Germany to 21 and getting a foothold in many Member States. They are now the second largest political force in the German delegation in the Parliament.

Nationalist parties in Europe have also scored some success, having secured 115 seats, potentially giving them a significantly strengthened voice in the European Parliament.

A NATIONALIST WAVE?

It was a mixed bag for the nationalist, populist and Eurosceptic parties. Individual parties such as Brexit Party (29 MEPs, UK), League (29 MEPs, Italy), Rassemblement National (22 MEPs, France)

did particularly well, becoming the largest representations for their respective countries. They also did well in Poland and Hungary. Elsewhere the vote failed to materialise, particularly in the Nordics. The challenge is that they are currently divided into multiple groups with many different priorities, many of which are nationally focused. Should Nationalist parties unite they will have a strong voice to redirect policy objectives or to counter pro-European forces.

A NEW BALANCE OF POWER IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The 2019 election has created a more splintered European Parliament. The two largest parties, who have traditionally occupied the centre ground have lost their overall majority for the first time. Other traditional groupings such as the Liberals and Greens have increased their respective share of the vote. We could also see more political groupings appearing depending on how different parties decide to coalesce moving forward. More divergent views will mean more opinions. As a result, the traditional structure of how Parliament reaches agreement will change, and there is a real opportunity for other political groupings to have a stronger voice.

ALL HAIL THE KINGMAKER

ALDE is seen as the potential kingmaker during the next mandate as no majority will be found amongst pro-European forces without them. Discussion will therefore now focus on how pro-European parties will join forces and whether there will for the first time be a four party coalition bringing together the EPP, the S&D, ALDE and the Greens.

The increased clout of ALDE and the Green Group will enable them to bring their political priorities to the fore. Job and investment will be a priority for all parties but single issue concerns. Climate change in particular, will be a key focus, especially for the Greens and those parties seeking to bolster their credentials with the youth vote.

INTERNAL NEGOTIATIONS ONGOING

Internal negotiations within each political group will intensify over the coming weeks. Based on national results, political parties from individual Member States will try to get a leading role in their respective European political groups. Discussions will also start in earnest about how a future grand coalition could work and how the EU's top jobs could be allocated.

ABOUT FTI CONSULTING

FTI Consulting is an independent global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organisations manage change, mitigate risk and resolve disputes: financial, legal, operational, political & regulatory, reputational and transactional.

FTI Consulting Brussels, with 70 professionals from 25 countries, is a hub office able to manage and coordinate international and pan-European strategic communications campaigns and programmes built around moments of change.



INTRODUCTION

THE REAL RACE FOR THE EU TOP JOB BEGINS

Expect tough and extended negotiations prior to the appointment of the next European Parliament and European Commission Presidents. The difference between EPP and S&D is small. Given the change in dynamic, it is possible that the top jobs may not necessarily go to the grouping that won the most seats, which is the traditional outcome. If other parties come together to oppose their candidate, we could see a different scenario. While the EPP remains the largest grouping in these elections it is still unclear if Manfred Weber, their choice to be the next Commission President, will be confirmed. Political groups will also start to prepare their staff for the first plenary session in Strasbourg to be held in early July.

IMPACT ON BUSINESS

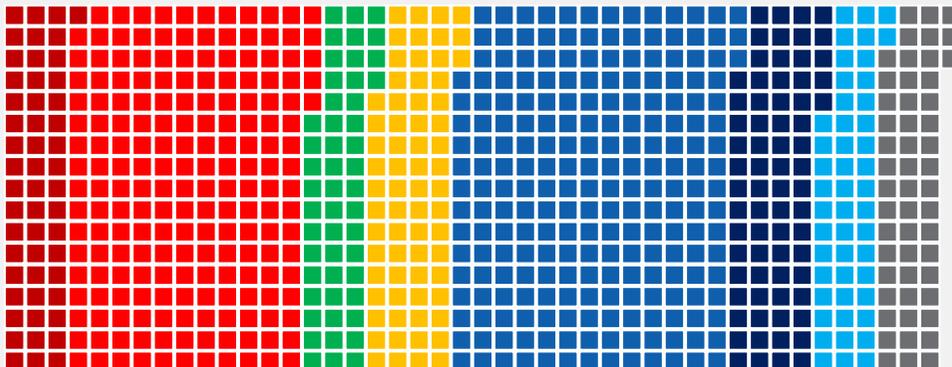
The status quo has changed, and business needs to be ready for what will become a far more layered political landscape. Time will tell if this creates confusion and gridlock or whether a more dynamic debate with more opinions will engage the elaborate at a time when the Parliament is under far more scrutiny to prove its value. It's a crossroads. Business needs to ensure it is fully engaged in what is very likely to become a more nuanced environment in an institution which is at the heart of Europe's policy and regulation debates, all of which have a significant impact on the world's largest single market.

INTRODUCING THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S CURRENT POLITICAL GROUPINGS:

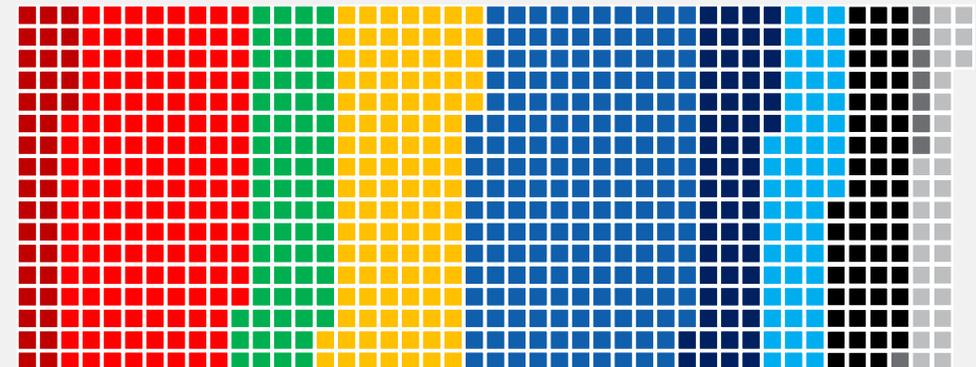
European Peoples Party (EPP) – Right, pro European, conservative
Socialists & Democrats (S&D) – Left, pro European, progressive
Alliance of Liberals & Democrats for Europe (ALDE) – Centrists, pro European, liberal values
The Greens / European Free Alliance (GREENS) – Left, pro European, progressive
Anti-establishment – Brings together Eurosceptic, populists and extreme parties (GUE/NGL, EFDD, ENF, NI)
ECR - European Conservatives and Reformists Group – Eurosceptic and anti-federalist

Source: EP Press News

2014



2019



28 MEMBER STATES



AUSTRIA



BELGIUM



BULGARIA



CROATIA



CYPRUS



CZECH REPUBLIC



DENMARK



ESTONIA



FINLAND



FRANCE



GERMANY



GREECE



HUNGARY



IRELAND



ITALY



LATVIA



LITHUANIA



LUXEMBOURG



MALTA



NETHERLANDS



POLAND



PORTUGAL



ROMANIA



SLOVAKIA



SLOVENIA



SPAIN



SWEDEN



UNITED KINGDOM

CLICK TO VIEW EACH COUNTRY





AUSTRIA

NO MAJOR CHANGES DESPITE TURMOIL AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The previous big question in Austria was to what extent the scandal around the Ibiza-video featuring Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache from the Freedom Party (FPÖ) would impact the outcome of the European elections. The new question is what future does Chancellor Sebastian Kurz now have while Austria looks for a new government?

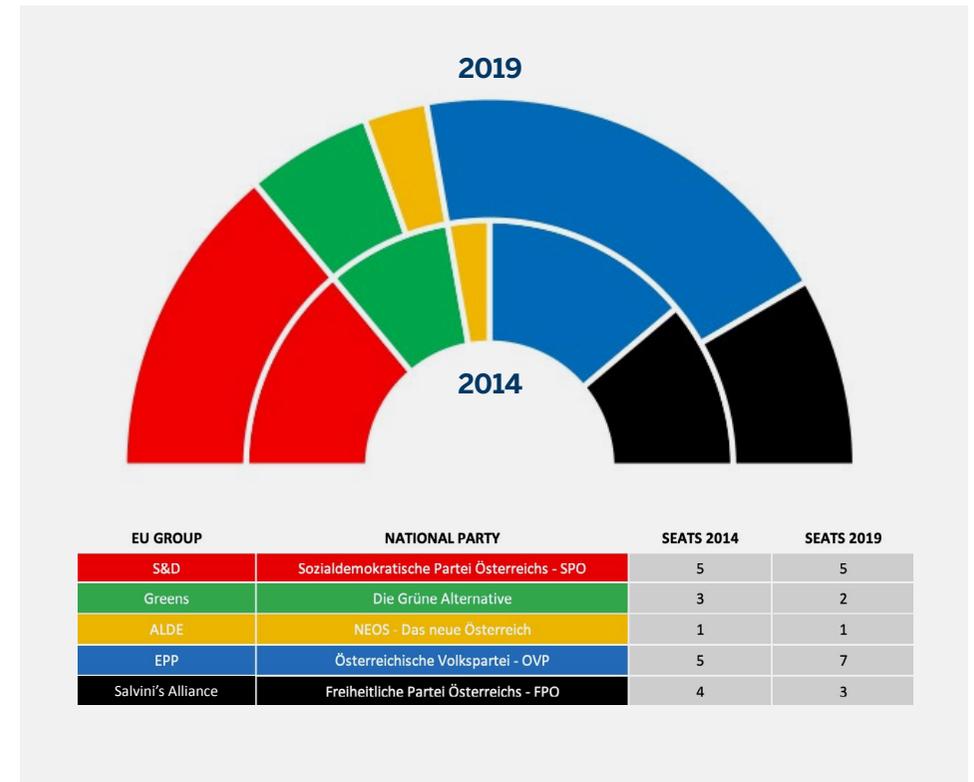
While the fall-out continues with the recent vote of no confidence, Kurz's conservative ÖVP Party secured a 35% share of the vote in the European elections, the largest in the country and up 8% compared to 2014. The social democratic SPÖ secured 24% of the vote, the same result it achieved in 2014, while the FPÖ only lost 1.7% to obtain 18% of the vote. The Greens lost 2.5% reaching 12% and the liberal NEOS slightly improved their result with 9%.

While the relatively small losses of the FPÖ confirm the trend that right-wing populists remain relatively unscathed, even from the worst scandals, the outcome is clearly a success for Kurz and ÖVP. He managed to capitalise on his popularity and avoid the broader European trend that has affected many of his other centre right counterparts in other Member States.

The outcome should strengthen Kurz's position within the EPP group and confirms his tough stance on migration. The fact that he included the right wing FPÖ in his Government doesn't appear to have hurt his popularity. Kurz might also gain more support from the EPP for his call to reform the Lisbon Treaty, an endeavour that seemed unrealistic before the elections.

Austria will now enter a phase of uncertainty with a provisional government until federal elections are held in September. In the short term this will limit Kurz's influence in his role as interim Chancellor, at a European level. However, he might very well come out in a stronger position in the medium term.

The Ibiza-video might have yet another consequence: Heinz-Christian Strache, could become a MEP as part of the new alliance of national parties that is emerging under Italy's Matteo Salvini.





BELGIUM

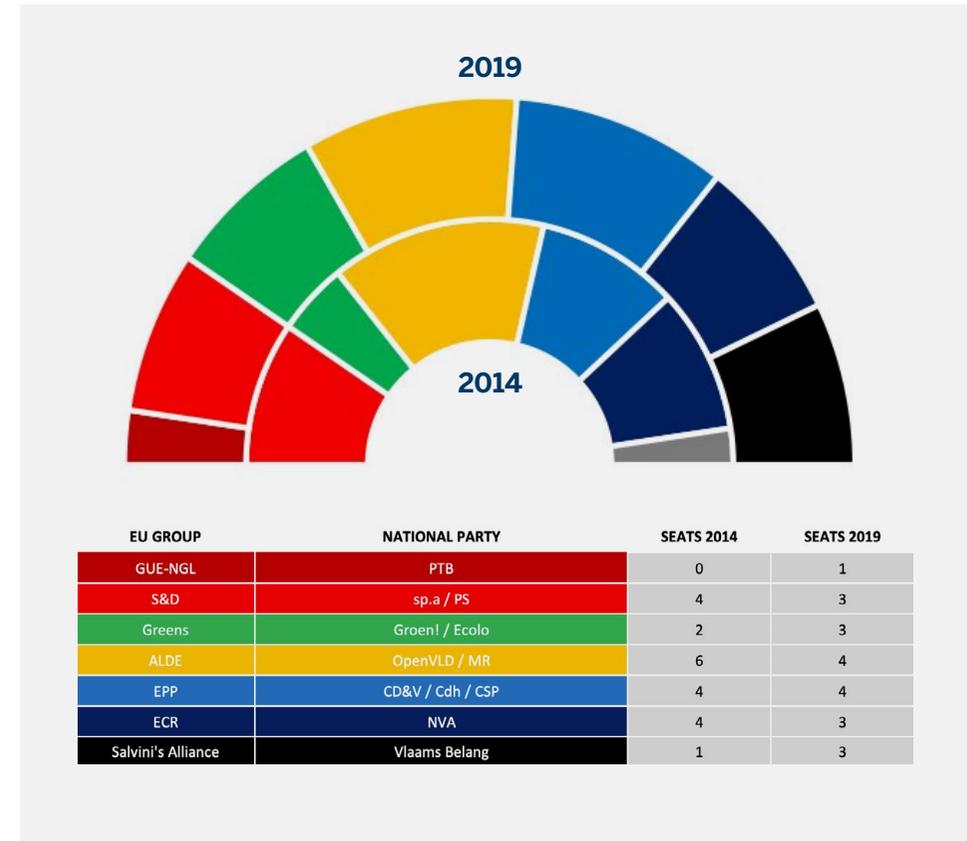
TRADITIONAL PARTIES LOSE OUT, WITH EXTREME PARTIES ON THE RISE

With 21 MEP seats available, allocation in Belgium is now quite fragmented. The Liberal Party lost the most and dropped from six to four seats. The Christian Democrat Party (EPP) maintained its four seats, thanks to strong performance in the German-speaking region, despite strong losses in Flanders and Wallonia. The Socialist Party (S&D) dropped from four to three seats, as did Belgium's largest party, the Flemish nationalists of N-VA (ECR), who dropped from four to three seats as well.

The winners came from the more extreme wings of the political spectrum. The strong performance of the Flemish extreme right 'Vlaams Belang' (ENF) was also reflected in the Belgian federal and regional elections that also took place. In Flanders, across the northern half of Belgium, it gained on average 8-10%, thereby becoming the second largest party in Flanders, behind the Flemish nationalists of N-VA. At the EU level this increases its number of seats from one to three.

In Wallonia, in the south, the tendency is quite the opposite. The losses that the traditional parties suffered were to the benefit of the Communist PTB Party (GUE-NGL), which has won its first ever seat. Finally, the Green Party secured a small success in both regions, although less than perhaps expected. It gained an additional seat, rising from two to three.

A lot of new faces will represent Belgium in the new legislature, and there are some surprises to note: long-standing Green MEP Bart Staes did not manage to reclaim his seat, as the party didn't clinch the expected second seat in Flanders. On the other hand, former Belgian finance minister (and briefly MEP in 2014) Johan Van Overtveldt marks his return to the hemicycle and will seek to make his mark on the ECON Committee. Returning MEPs include Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D). Two former Flemish Minister-Presidents – Geert Bougeois (ECR) and Kris Peeters (EPP) – will seek to make a mark in their first mandate.





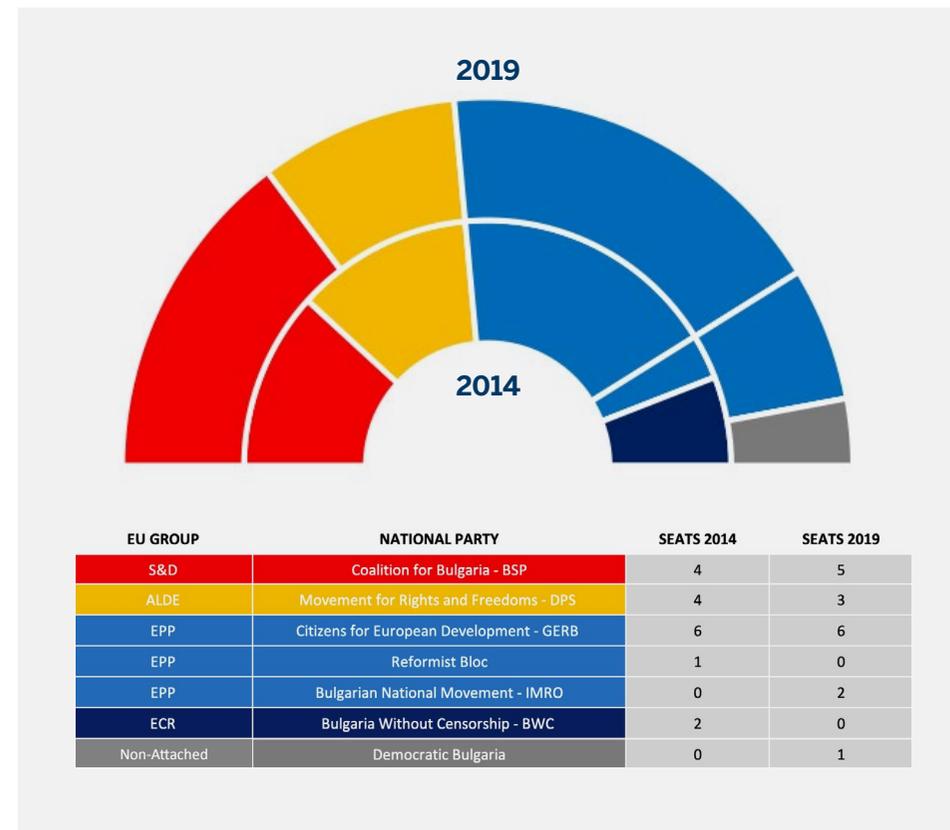
BULGARIA

LOW TURNOUT REFLECTED IN STATUS QUO

The elections in Bulgaria were defined by a strikingly low turn-out of around 30%. It was expected that major recent corruption scandals would impact the result, but this hasn't materialised, and the results are almost a re-run of the parliamentary elections in 2017.

Citizens for United Bulgaria (GERB), the party of the Prime Minister, won the elections, ahead of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), the main opposition party, accounting for almost 31% of the vote compared to over 24% (after 95% of the vote had been counted). The Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria (DPS), which mostly represents the country's Turkish ethnic minority, secured the third largest vote. Out of seventeen seats available, these parties secured six, five and three seats respectively. IMRO, the Bulgarian National Movement, won two seats. Thanks largely to the strong support of Bulgarians living abroad, a new coalition of centre-right parties and the Greens, Democratic Bulgaria (DB), will have one representative.

On issues, all parties, excluding IMRO, strongly support the membership of Bulgaria in the EU. The debates in the run-off to the campaign had little to do with European issues and focused mostly on domestic issues, notably corruption. IMRO, which is part of the coalition of parties that form the junior partner in the governing coalition, reflects many nationalist movements across Europe, positioning itself against globalism and Eurocentrism, calling for more 'independence' of national capitals from Brussels.





CROATIA

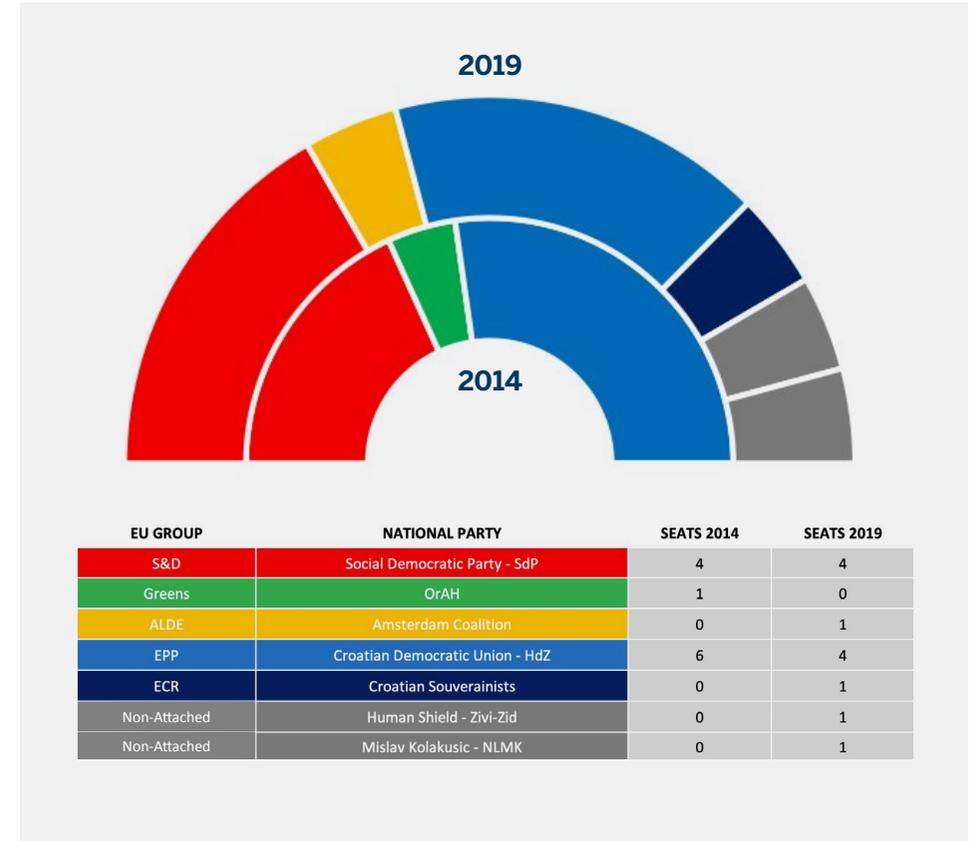
A HIGHLIGHT FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Croatia has eleven MEPs and this election offered a last-minute surprise for the Social Democrats (SPD). It secured the largest number of votes at the expense of the ruling HDZ (EPP). Both secured four seats. Considering the bad polling and reported infighting within the SPD reported over the past year, this is quite an indictment of HDZ's government, which is facing parliamentary elections in 2020.

The Amsterdam Coalition (which should become members of ALDE), the Souverenists (ECR) and Human Shield, which will form part of the new alliance of nationalist parties being formed by Matteo Salvini of Italy, have secured one seat each. Mislav Kolakusic has also secured a seat as an independent. He is a judge who has focused on anti-corruption and is not aligned to any political group.

Croatian MEPs are expected to predominantly join the Foreign Affairs (AFET) and Regional Development (REGIO) Committees. SDP will bring two of its strongest MEPs back, Tonino Picula in AFET and Biljana Borzan to the Internal Market Committee (IMCO).

Finally, HDZ's leading candidate Karlo Ressler will potentially not take his MEP seat as he is the rumoured favourite to be the next Croatian Commissioner.



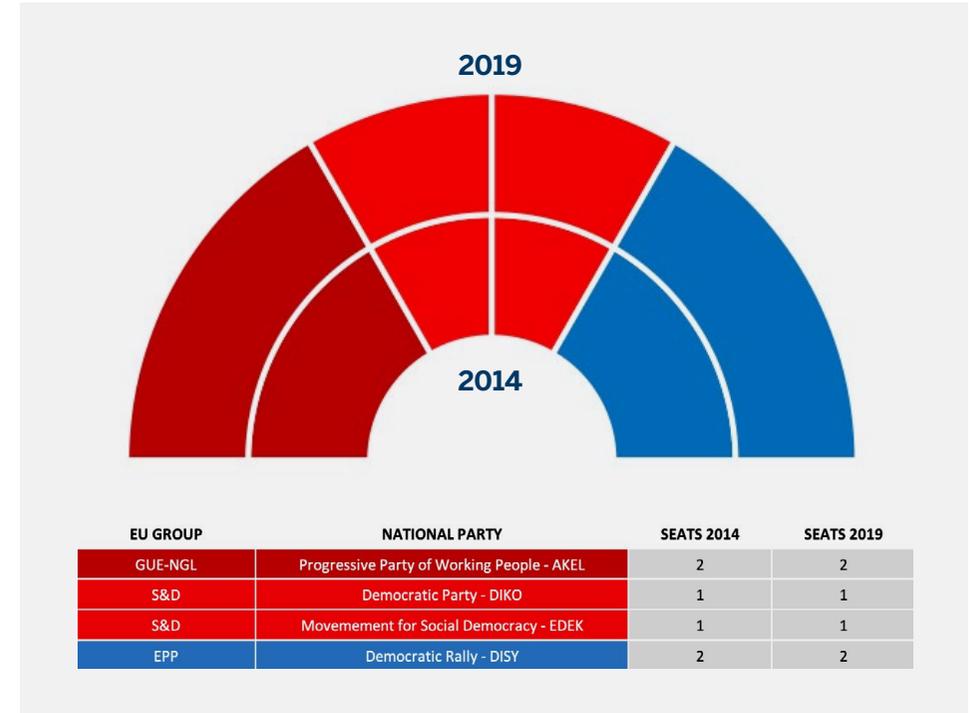


CYPRUS

FIRST TURKISH CYPRIOT MEP WHILE NATIONALISTS MAKE GAINS

Cyprus is represented by 6 MEPs. With a turnout of 43%, the ruling Disy Party secured the highest support in the country with 27% of the vote, securing two seats. The opposition party AKEL were close behind with 25%, and also won two seats. The centre-right Diko came in third with 14% and the socialist Edek with 11%, securing the remaining 2 seats, with one each. The far-right nationalist Elam secured 8% and the Jasmine Turkish Cypriot Party got 2% of the vote. Neither subsequently secured any seats.

One of the most notable outcomes was the election of a Turkish Cypriot academic, Niyazi Kizilyurek (AKEL), to the European Parliament. He is the first ever Turkish Cypriot to gain a seat in the EU's legislative body. This is a symbolically significant development for a country that is still divided amongst ethnic lines and is struggling to find its path back to reunification. The other notable outcome was the rise of the nationalist party which did not secure a seat but saw a significant surge of support; tripling its votes compared to the 2014 European elections.





CZECH REPUBLIC

A EUROSCEPTIC SURGE BASED ON A LOW TURNOUT

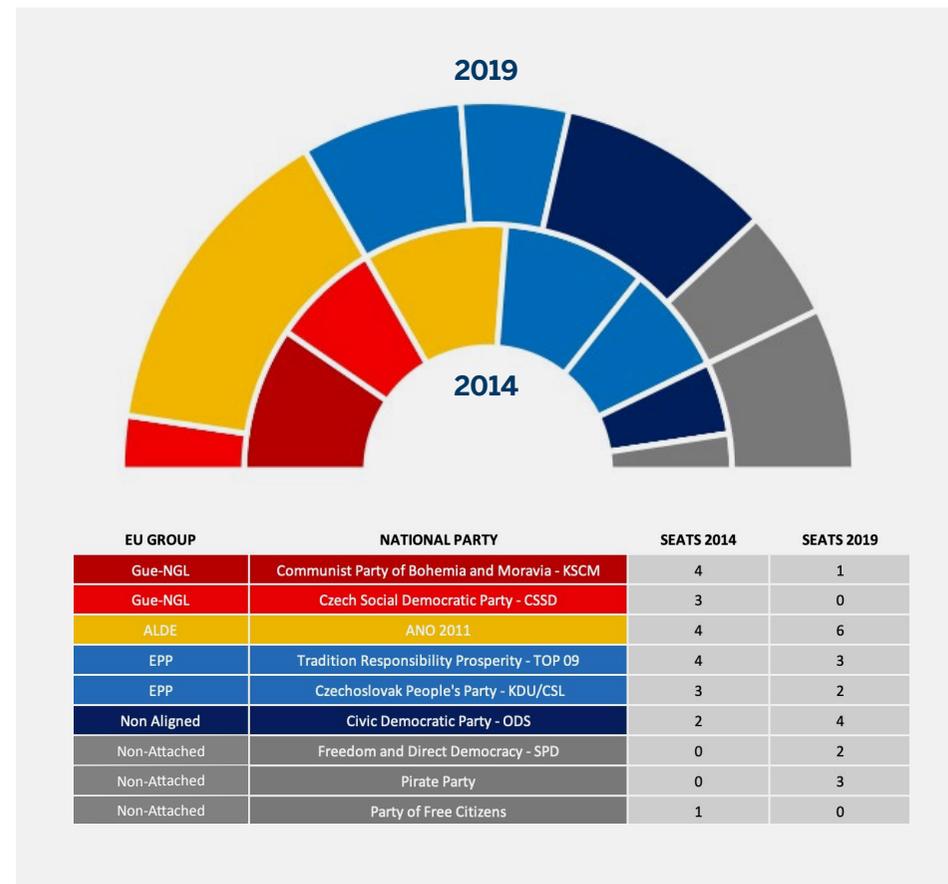
The Czech Republic is one of the few countries in the European Union in which Eurosceptics are in the majority. The 28.7% election turnout reflects a generally low enthusiasm for the European Union with as many as 24% of the Czech population saying that they would vote to leave the EU, the second highest number after the UK.

The main gains in this election were either with conservative or Eurosceptic parties. Competing for a total of 21 national seats, the largest success for these elections were with Prime Minister Babiš's ANO Party. Despite the scandals surrounding his alleged subsidy fraud, the party secured 21% of the vote and six seats.

The Civic Democratic Party (ECR) came second with 14.5%, winning four seats. A surprise is the success of the anti-establishment Pirate Party which came third. The party managed to gain the support of young voters, gaining almost 14% of the votes and three seats. While not right wing Eurosceptics, its success is still due to the disillusionment with the mainstream parties.

The centre right coalition of Mayor & Independents and the Party for Tradition, Responsibility & Prosperity also secured three seats. Another centre right coalition between the Christian Democrats and the Czech People's Party secured two seats

The Communist Party lost two seats and is left with one. The Social Democrats had a disastrous night losing four seats and will not send any MEPs to Brussels this time round. This continues the dramatic downward trend of the party that already lost 35 of its 50 seats in the last Parliamentary elections. Similar to the German Social Democrats this trend illustrates the deep crisis of traditional social democracy in Europe.





DENMARK

PRO EU PARTIES ARE THE WINNERS

With a national election on 5th June, there were concerns that voters would be deterred from casting their ballots in these European elections. With a 66% voter turn-out, these were unfounded. Some are even saying that Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's dream scenario of generating more political interests has come true, to the benefit of pro EU parties.

The overarching theme for all these parties is the focus on climate issues. Brexit has also had an impact and a possible period of national reflection, perhaps driving the pro EU vote.

The Danish Liberal party (ALDE) is the biggest winner, securing 23.5% of the votes and four of the fourteen Danish seats, including a potential additional Brexit seat if the UK seats are reallocated. This is the best result ever for the party in a European parliamentary election. The Radical Liberals (ALDE) have also had a good election, doubling their seats to two, strengthening the candidacy of Margrethe Vestager for the Commission Presidency position. She is currently the popular Commissioner in charge of DG Competition. Consequently, ALDE will have six Danish members.

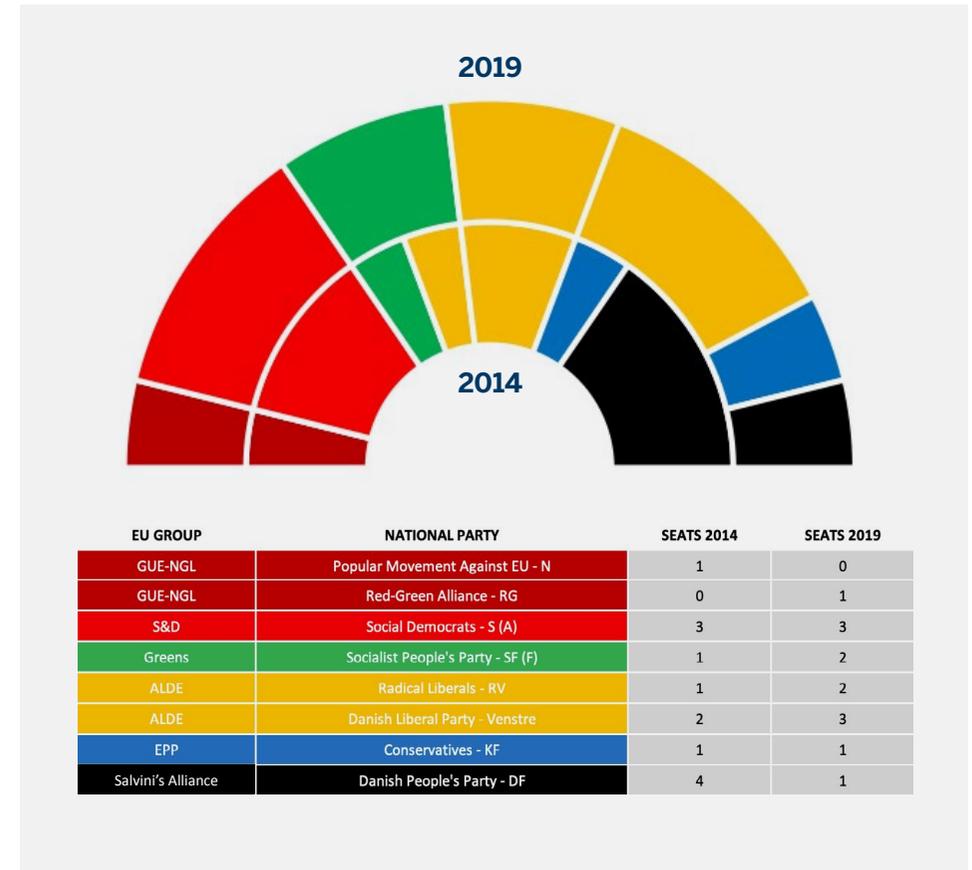
The Socialist People's Party followed the general EU trend of the Greens by also doubling its seats to two.

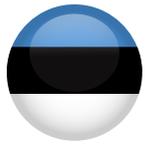
The Social Democrats (S&D) kept its three seats. It was noteworthy that in her election speech party leader, Mette Frederiksen, very quickly directed the attention to the upcoming national election.

The Conservatives (EPP) had the most nerve-racking run with a clear risk of Denmark not having a seat in the EPP group for the very first time. However, it became clear at the last moment that they would retain one seat, with the relatively unknown Pernille Weiss taking over the party leadership from Bent Bendtsen.

The more nationalist Danish Peoples Party had a very bad election. It only secured one seat, down from four. High ranking politicians in the Party have mentioned the EU led investigation into misappropriated funds in the MELD and FELD-case which has dragged on for three years. The lack of an election alliance didn't help either.

The Eurosceptic Popular Movement Against EU is also feeling the sentiment change failing to secure a seat. The Red Green Alliance, its partner, managed to secure one seat in its first ever European campaign, with a somewhat softer, albeit still EU-critical line.





ESTONIA

A LIBERAL STRONGHOLD

The voter turnout in Estonia was almost 38%, one percentage point higher than in the 2014 elections. Overall, ALDE-affiliated parties remained dominant.

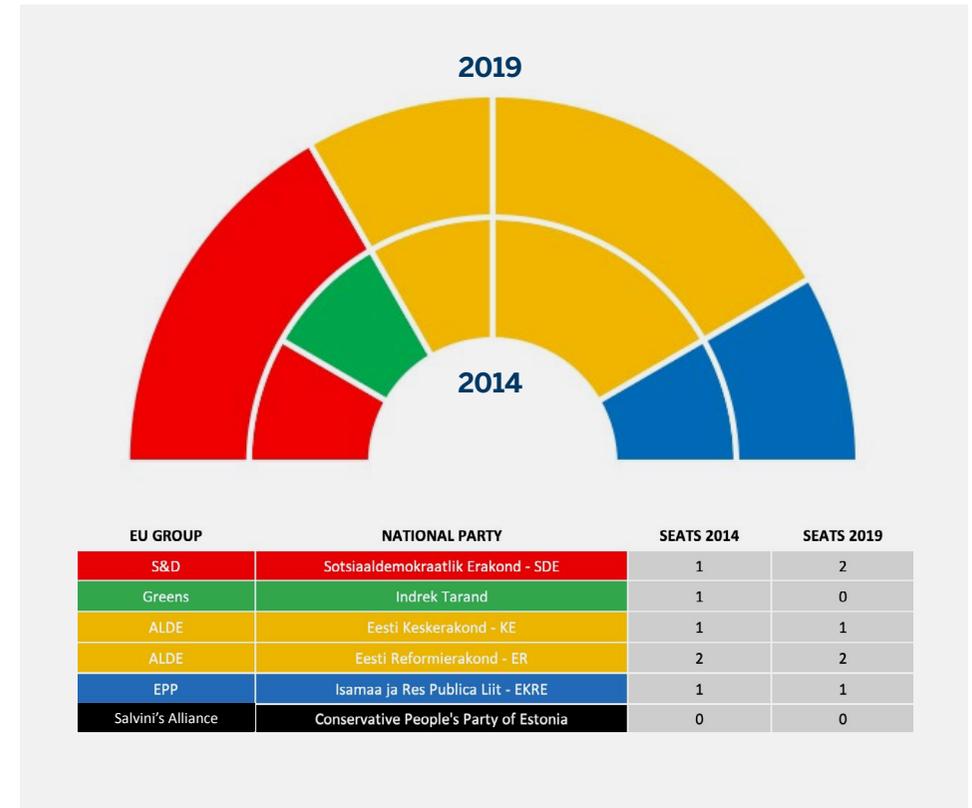
The Estonian Reform Party (ER) secured the most votes with just over 26% of votes, maintaining its two seats in the European Parliament. These will be filled by Vice-President of the European Commission Adrus Ansip and by Estonia's foreign minister, Urmas Paet.

The Socialist Party (SDE) won a little over 23% of votes, an increase of nearly ten percentage points from 2014. Marina Kaljurand remained the most popular candidate, with nearly 20% of respondents voting for her. She gave the party a badly needed boost, perhaps enough to ensure a second seat for Sven Mikser.

The Centre Party (KE), the largest opposition party, continues to lose its popularity, with only 14.4 % of votes and one seat remaining.

The Conservative People's Party (EKRE) has clearly lost ground since the March general election. Until recently polls were promising that it would two or even three seats. they are now down to 12.7% and are only likely to secure one seat.

Conservative party (Isamaa) candidate, Riho Terras is on the waiting list for the seventh seat following the post-Brexit redistribution of some of the UK's seats.





FINLAND

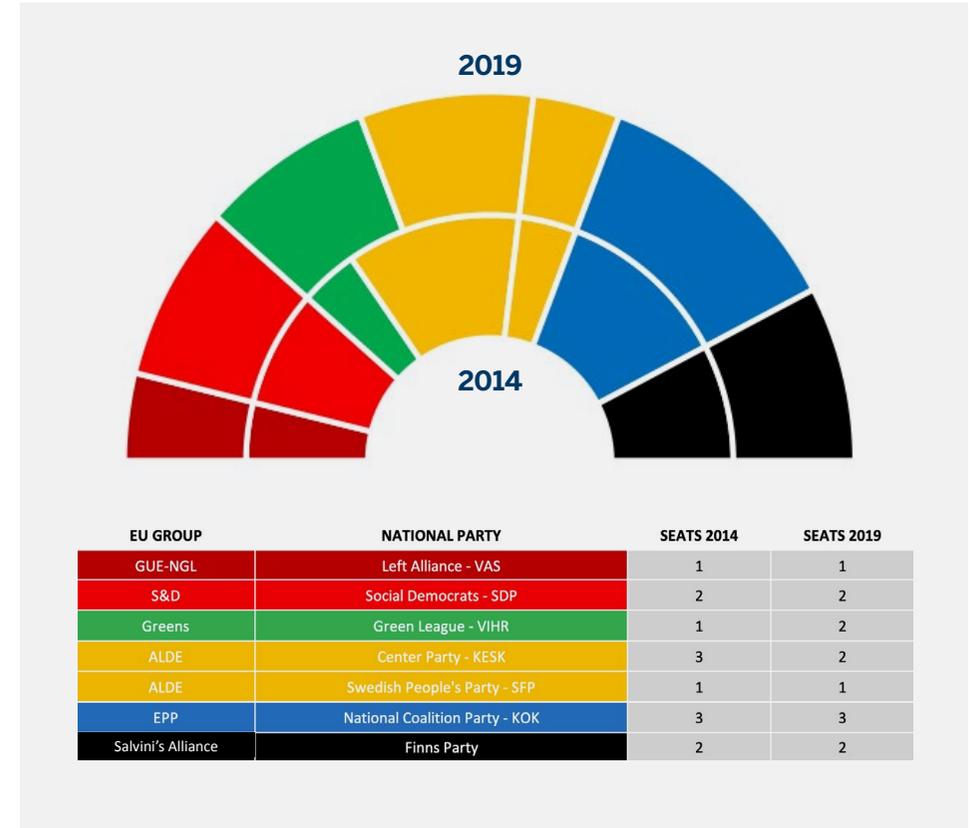
A SURPRISING RESULT

Finland has become a battleground for right-wing populist parties. The Finns Party, which had an aggressive anti-immigration campaign, came in at a close second behind the Social Democrats in April's general election. The question in these elections seemed to be whether the Social Democrats could mobilise enough voters and repeat its success or whether the Finns Party would secure the top spot.

The actual outcome came as a surprise. The winner is the centre right National Coalition Party or Kokoomus (KOK), which could end up gaining over 20% of the votes ahead of the Green VIHR party that won 15.9%. The liberal KESK party gained 13.6% and the Swedish People's Party 6.3%. In the end The Finns Party did not increase its result from 2014, securing 13.9% of the votes.

The discrepancy between the general election in April and the European election can probably be explained by different political priorities. At the general election, the failed welfare reform of the center-right Government was the decisive factor in that election. At the European level, climate change has regained its status as a key issue in Finland, which has benefited the VIHR. The success of the center-right KOK, the party of Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, is a vote for a stable Europe.

Overall the outcome is an almost exact duplicate of 2014, with only one seat moving from the Liberals to the Greens. With this result Finland remains a beacon of stability and shows how the integration of right-wing parties into the political system can be managed without spinning out of control. This is welcome news for EU. Finland holds the next EU Council Presidency which will begin in July. A strong result for the Eurosceptic Finns Party could have potentially weakened Finland's ability to manage the appointment and handover of the EU's new leadership team.





FRANCE

AN EMERGING DUOPOLY BETWEEN PROGRESSIVES AND NATIONALISTS. A SURPRISING THIRD PLACE FOR THE GREENS

The first major surprise of this election is the high turnout. The share of the vote increased by a significant 9% compared to 2014, rising to over 51%. This is the highest since the 1994 European parliamentary elections.

Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National (RN) led the vote securing 22 seats, one down from 2014. EU Renaissance (LREM/MoDem), supported by President Emmanuel Macron, enters Parliament for the first time with 21 seats, compared to the seven secured by MoDem five years ago.

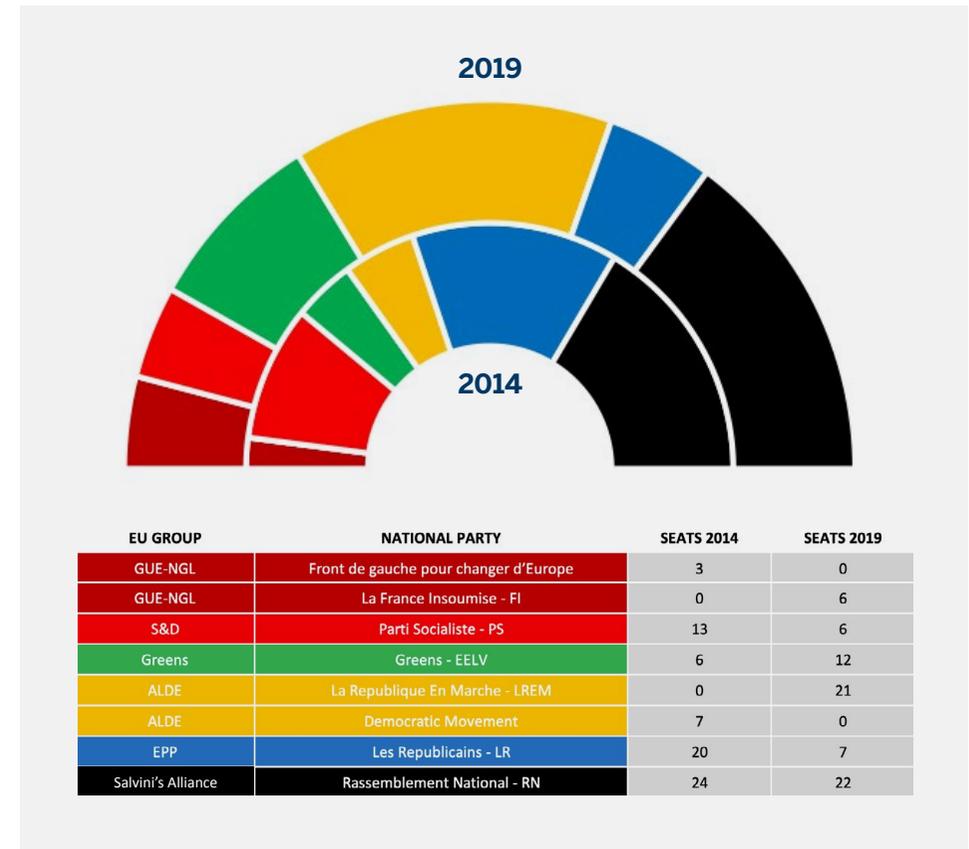
Jordan Bardella, the 23-year old former head of the RN's youth movement, who led the list in these European Parliament elections, claimed victory in a rematch of the 2017 presidential election. RN officials say the outcome is a sanction against Macron's government, insisting this is a vote on national politics and not about the EU.

The Government has been relatively humble in its formal response, conceding it has one seat less than RN. Several ministers and LREM officials called it a decent result. However, President Macron is rumoured to have stated his "disappointment" at his party's campaign, led by Nathalie Loiseau.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe dismissed Le Pen's call for his resignation, adding that his Government will continue to implement the second phase of President Macron's reform mandate.

The Greens (Europe Ecologie/Les Verts - EELV) came out very strongly, coming third, doubling its number of MEPs compared to 2014, securing twelve seats. Yannick Jadot, its leader, can claim victory for his environmental transition platform. Remarkably, sustainability featured as a priority in most party programmes, a move Jadot's friends called greenwashing in an attempt to capture citizens' concerns about climate change. Noticeably, the party is now the largest in the under 34 age category in France.

The two parties that have lost the most are Les Républicains (LR), on the centre right, and La France Insoumise (LFI), on the far left. LR, led by newcomer François-Xavier Bellamy, came fourth with slightly above 8%, securing seven seats which will be seen internally as a disappointment. LFI, led by another new leader, Manon Aubry, ended up in fifth place, on par with the Socialists, who have now rebranded themselves to Place Publique, led by Raphaël Glucksmann.



LFI and PP secured nearly 7% of the ballot and six MEP seats each. LFI leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon said he was "very disappointed". His party secured three times more votes in the 2017 presidential election.

26 other parties did not make the cut, securing less than 5%, including former presidential candidate Benoît Hamon's Génération.s party.



GERMANY

A GREEN PEOPLE'S PARTY IS BORN

While the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) remained the largest party, securing almost 29% of the vote, the big winners in Germany in these elections were the Greens who secured 20.5% of the national vote, nearly double their results compared to 2014. They are now the second strongest party in the German delegation in the European Parliament.

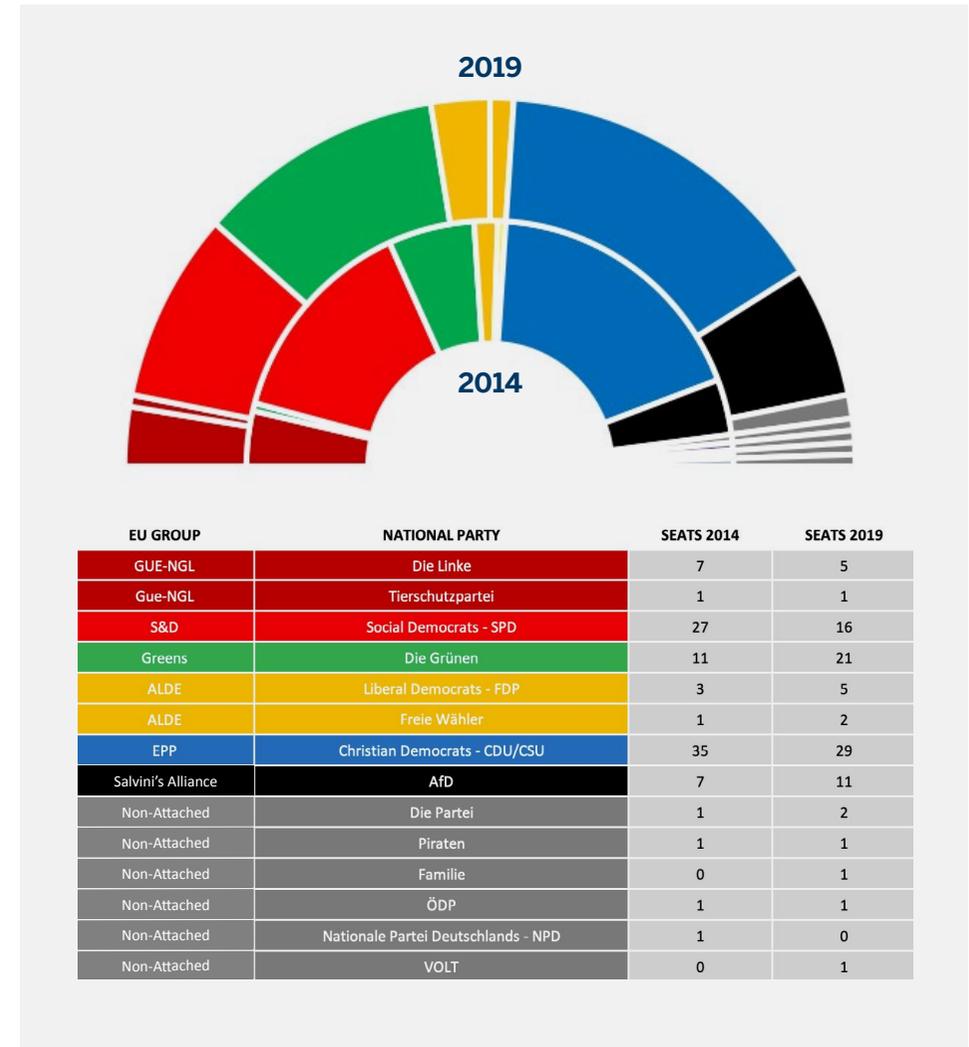
Overall the two governing parties CDU, and Social Democratic Party (SPD) on the centre left, made significant losses. Their results are the worst in any election since the establishment of the Federal Republic. The extreme right AfD gained less than expected; the liberal FDP and the Left settled at around 5%. About 10% went to protest and splitter parties such as the Pirates, the satirical PARTEI and the Animal Rights Party.

Voter turnout was 61.5% compared to 48.1% in 2014, highlighting a new trend for increased political involvement among the population, particularly from the younger generation. The Greens are currently the strongest party in Germany for those under 60 years old. It greatly benefitted from an extensive voter migration from all democratic parties, which is a new phenomenon.

Just before the election, a young, blue-haired German YouTuber known as Rezo attacked Chancellor Merkel's governing CDU for a range of sins: growing social inequality, pollution, war and internet censorship, complete with a list of 247 references and citations of scientific literature. The YouTube video went viral and had a huge impact on younger voters who demanded that the older generation watch it and reconsider their vote.

It was a political election, penalising the grand coalition and formulating a fundamental wish for change: the younger generation showed you can be unhappy and even angry at the establishment without turning to the extreme right or populists; they stood up for the climate and the environment, for the European Union and cosmopolitanism, for justice and against right-wing extremists.

The bad outcome for the CDU and the CSU, its sister party in Bavaria, is bad news for Manfred Weber's prospects of becoming Commission President, echoing many sceptical voices about his candidacy within the European establishment. The fact that he could not mobilize enough support in Germany to stop the downward trend of the CDU will not strengthen his case.



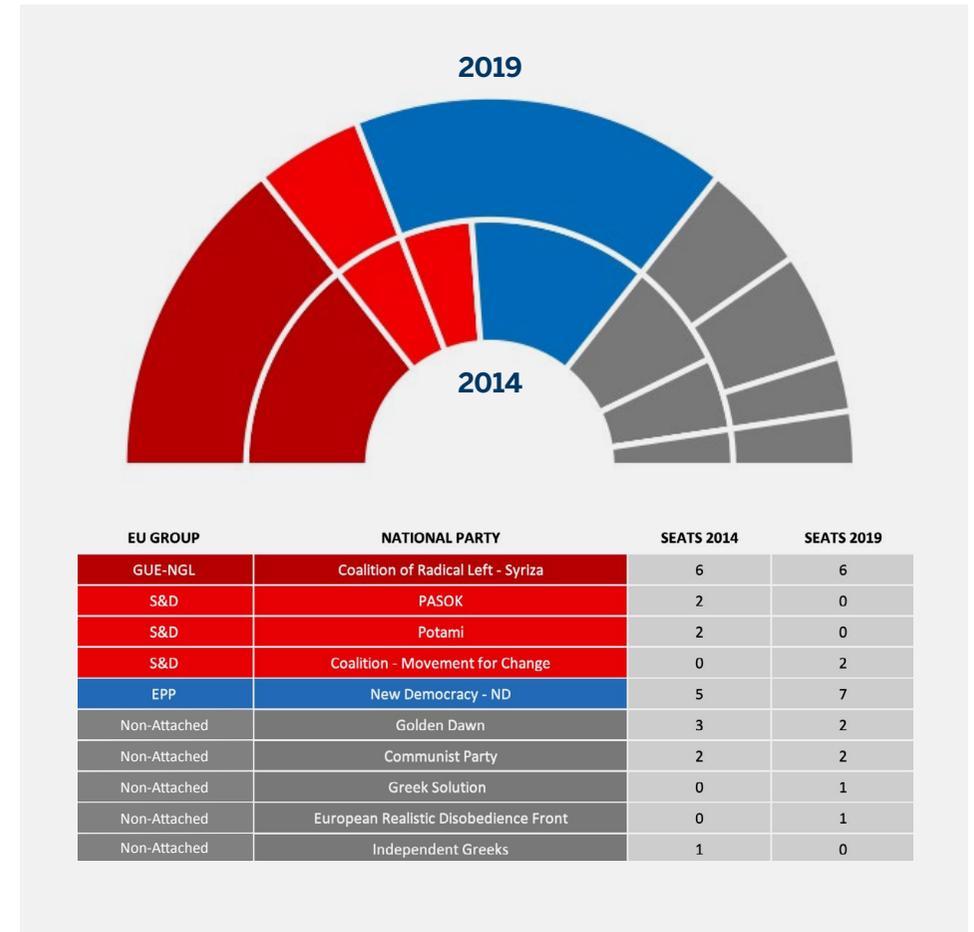


GREECE

RESULTS OF EU ELECTIONS RESULT IN SNAP GENERAL ELECTIONS

New Democracy made a comeback as the clear winners of the elections in Greece, improving its representation from five to seven MEPs. New Democracy had a clear nine-point lead over the ruling Syriza government. Nevertheless, Syriza held on to its six MEPs – equal to its result from the last elections in 2014. The right-wing Golden Dawn lost a seat (from two to one), the Movement for Change (previously PASOK) got two, while the liberal Potami lost all its seats, falling from two to zero. New entrants: MERA25, the left-wing party of Yanis Varoufakis, the eccentric former Finance Minister of Greece, and the pro-Russian right wing The Greek Solution party, both secured one seat each.

Following the results, Greek Prime Minister Tsipras said that the “outcome was not up to our expectations” and stated his intent to call for snap general elections (expected 30 June, but to be confirmed). Meanwhile the opposition leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis (New Democracy) demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Tsipras declaring that “it is obvious that the Greek people have withdrawn their confidence in this Government, the Prime Minister must assume his responsibilities. He must resign, and the country should hold national elections.”





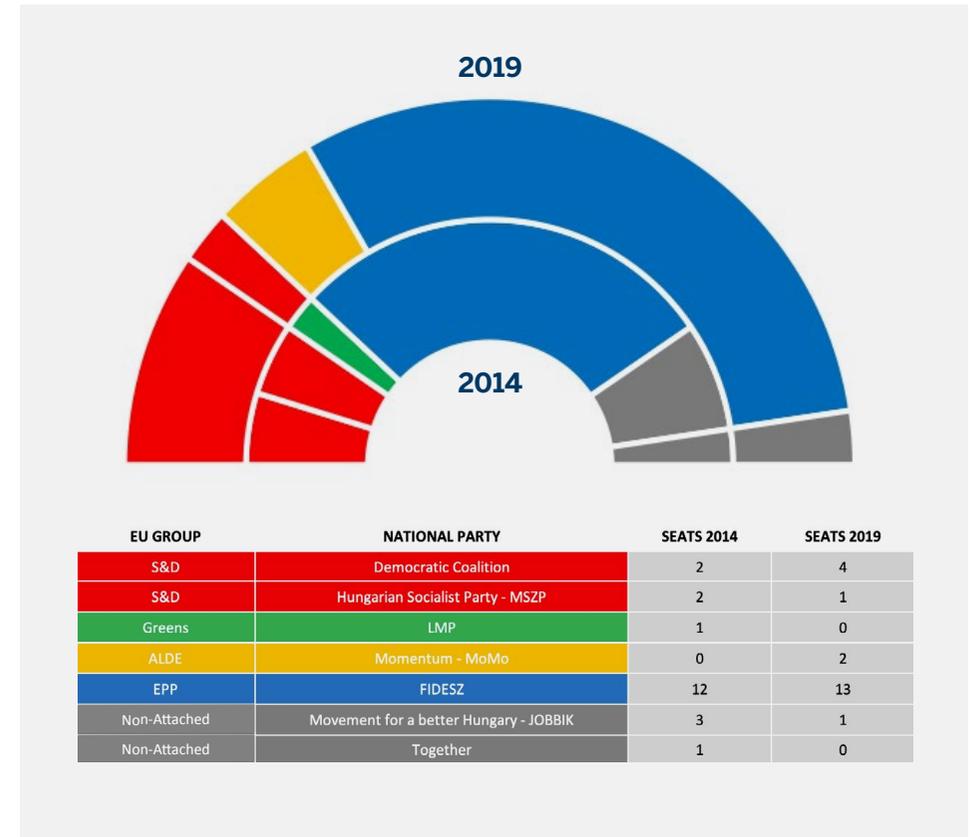
HUNGARY

ORBAN IS A WINNER

Unlike other countries in Europe where voters used the European elections to vent their frustration with the ruling parties, in Hungary Prime Minister Orban's Fidesz party not only won the absolute majority but was able to clinch another seat. The thirteen seats, which technically belong to the EPP group, could be an uneasy fit: the party was suspended from the EPP earlier this year for strong anti-Brussels sentiment shown in a poster campaign. It waits to be seen now if the Prime Minister will act on his threats to move his people to the new national group emerging around Italy's right-wing Interior Minister Matteo Salvini.

The leftish Democratic Movement came in second with four seats, and together with one seat from the Hungarian Socialist Party, the S&D group has a total of five seats from Hungary (one up from 2014). The Momentum Movement, affiliated with Alde + En Marche, who managed to get two seats, were the other winners this year. The losers were Jobbik (non-affiliated), which went from three to one seat and the Greens lost their only Hungarian seat.

Voter turnout was at a record high of 43%.

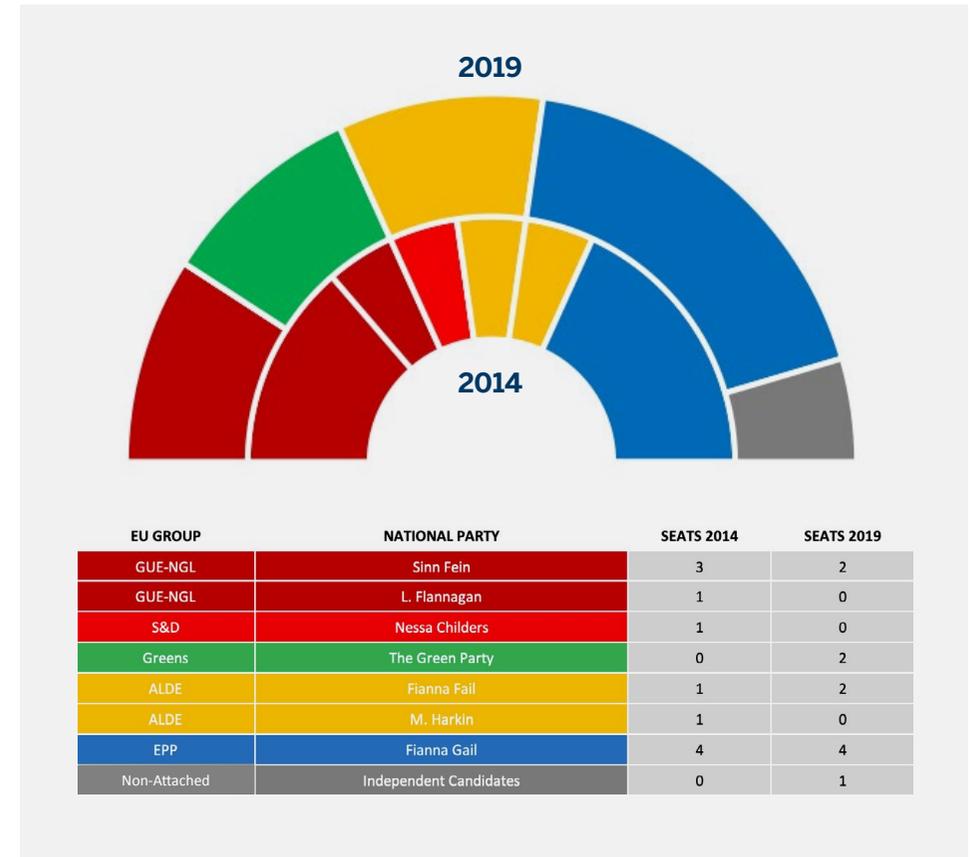


While counts are still being finalised, it seems the country will see relative stability in its 11 EU representatives. Leading party Fine Gael will maintain at least three of its four seats, while opposition party Fianna Fáil will likely go from one seat to two. Sinn Fein may lose its Dublin seat to Ciarán Cuffe of the Greens – a party which could go from no seats to three, and who are also celebrating significant gains in simultaneous local elections.

Despite near certainty on the success of the Greens in Dublin, with Cuffe having topped the poll, the capital's constituency has now gone through no less than seven counts at this stage. Cuffe and the Green's win comes after years of absence at the European level. He previously stepped down from a role as party environment spokesperson during a Fianna Fáil/Green coalition after it emerged that he held tens of thousands of euros worth of shares in oil and gas exploration companies. Cuffe's success could be felt as a blow to Sinn Fein's Lynn Boylan, who may lose her seat. Boylan, well liked amongst Brussels NGOs, is a former ecologist who has been very active on climate and environment issues throughout the last mandate. Interestingly, Boylan could find herself in the unique position of gaining from her own party's loss in a post-Brexit reshuffle of transfers which could see Northern Irish Sinn Fein MEP Martina Anderson leave. Former Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Frances Fitzgerald of Fine Gael is set to take the second seat in Dublin, along with Barry Andrews of Fianna Fáil or Independent Clare Daly.

The Ireland South constituency will see continuity with Fine Gael's Sean Kelly and Sinn Féin's Liadh Ní Riada most likely returning. Fianna Fáil's Billy Kelleher is currently well placed for success while Independent Mick Wallace, Green Grace O'Sullivan, Fine Gael's Deirdre Clune and Fianna Fáil's Malcolm Byrne fighting for the last seat. As a former Greenpeace activist, O'Sullivan could bring quite a different shade of green to the table compared to her more industry friendly Dublin counterpart.

In Midlands North West the European Parliament's First Vice President Mairead McGuinness of Fine Gael will likely top the poll and return to Brussels along with GUE/NGL's independent Luke Flanagan. Sinn Fein have had something of a tense count in this constituency, having feared that Matt Carthy will lose his seat to young Green representative Saoirse McHugh.





ITALY

SALVINI LEADS THE NATIONALIST BLOCK IN EUROPE

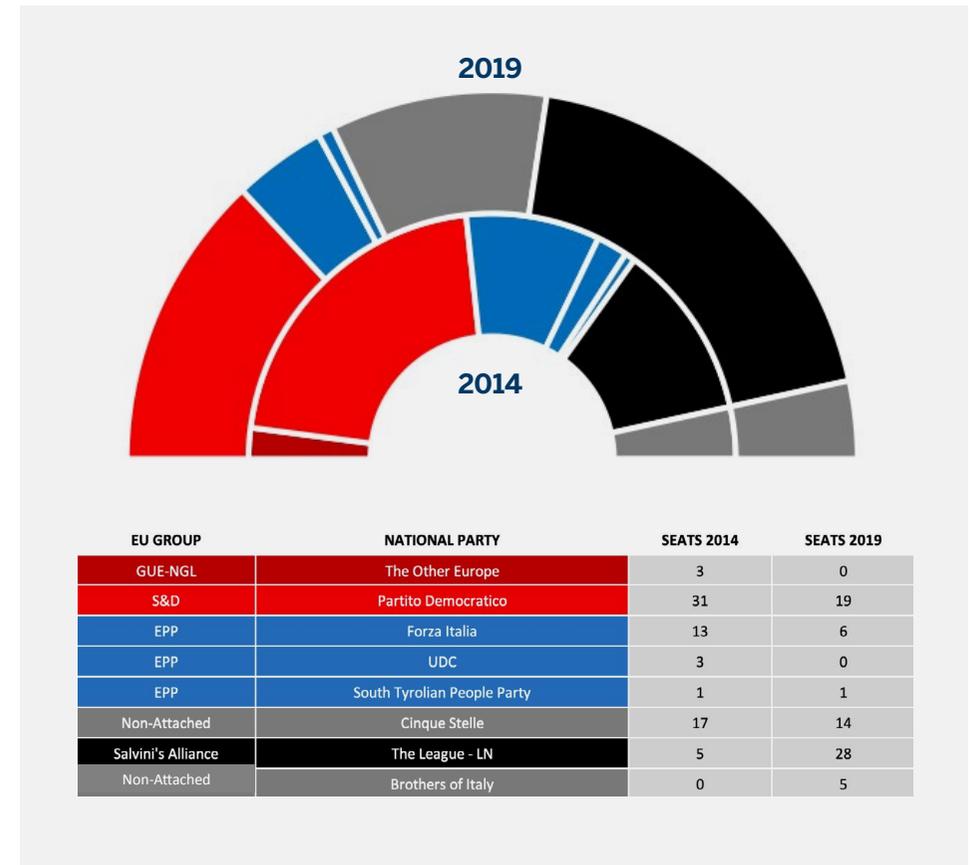
The League has become the largest Italian party for the first time in its 30-year history, increasing its support from last-year's national parliamentary elections to a record 34.4%. Their representation in Strasbourg will now grow from 5 to 29 MEPs. The vote positions the League as the third biggest national delegation in the European Parliament (after the CDU of Germany and the Brexit Party in the United Kingdom) and consolidates Matteo Salvini's position as the leader of the new proposed nationalist political group over Marine Le Pen of France. Salvini, Italian deputy Prime Minister and the head of the League, is not expected not to come back to Strasbourg and will remain focussed on domestic politics.

With the League's victory widely anticipated in the polls, the real race was for second place. The centre-left Democratic Party (PD) with nearly 23% of the votes has re-gained ground and overtaken anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) as the second party in Italy. This can be considered a success for the new leadership of Nicola Zingaretti, despite the fact that the PD delegation within the S&D will decrease from 31 to 19 MEPs. On the contrary, these elections have considerably weakened the M5S, which is down to 17% of votes from 33% in the last national parliamentary elections. Low voter participation in Southern Italy has certainly contributed to its defeat, but also an unclear positioning on many topical issues.

While Berlusconi and President Tajani will both join the next European Parliament, centre-right Forza Italia confirms its decline with less than 9% of the votes. Right-wing Fratelli d'Italia will contribute six MEPs to the ECR group. Neither pro-European liberal +Europa, nor the Italian greens have reached the 4% threshold necessary to elect MEPs.

With the success of an anti-European force, Italy may see its influence in the EU significantly reduced. It is unlikely to win any top job in the EU institutions following the end of the mandate of European Parliament President Tajani, European Central Bank President Draghi and High Representative Mogherini. It is clear, however, that due to its new European dimension, the League cannot afford to remain marginal in the next European Parliament and will work with the other nationalist parties to challenge the majority's policies.

From a national perspective, this vote is likely to create significant repercussions. The balance of power between the two governing parties (M5S-League) has completely turned around, and in the coming months, this may result in a re-shuffle or even a collapse of the Government coalition.



This political uncertainty at the national level may further undermine the financial and economic situation of the country, especially in view of a difficult budget law to be adopted towards the end of the year. In case of anticipated elections, there now seems to be sufficient support for a right-wing government in Italy under the leadership of Salvini, even without the support of Berlusconi's Forza Italia.



LATVIA

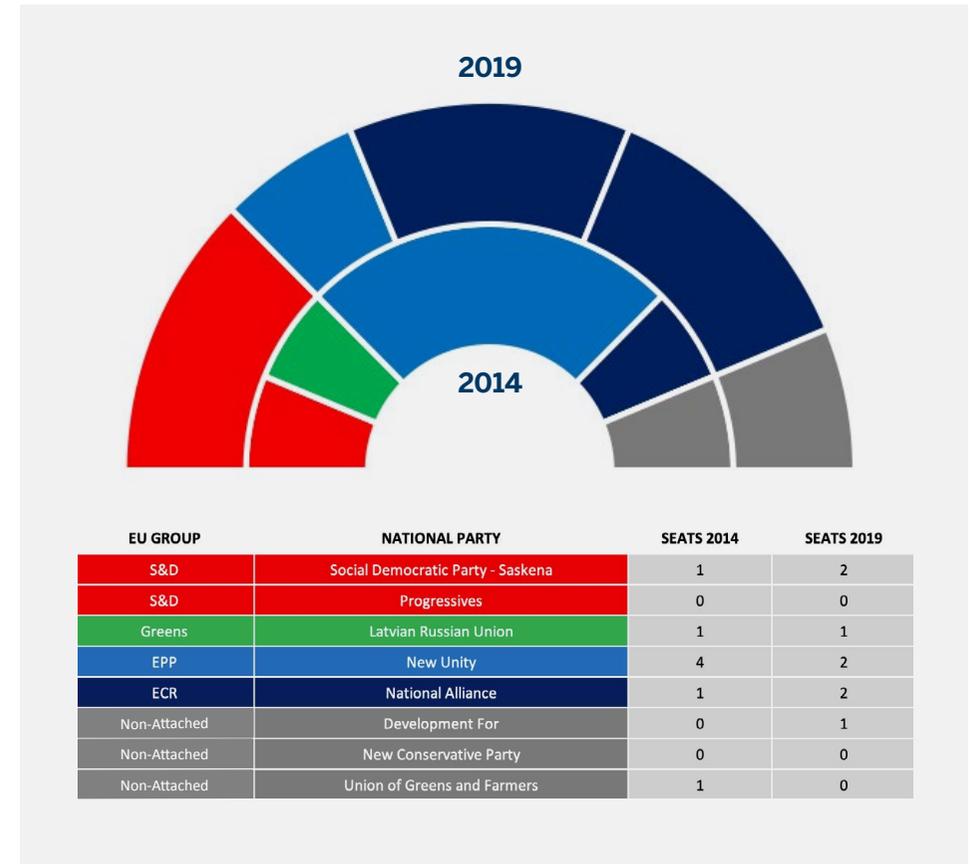
NO BIG SURPRISES WITH A LOW TURNOUT

Sixteen parties or 246 individuals have competed for eight seats in the European Parliament. The voter turnout was just over 33% compared to the 30% recorded in 2014 and 53% recorded in 2009.

New Unity Party, which forms the backbone of Latvia's Parliament, gained the majority (26%) and will be represented in the European Parliament by Valdis Dombrovskis and Sandra Kalniete. Dombrovskis has previously held the position of the Vice President of the Commission and Kalniete is one of the better-known MEPs from Latvia. This is the only party that will be in the EPP at the European Parliament in Latvia.

Harmony Party (S&D) received over 17% and will be sending Andris Ameriks and Nils Ushakov to Brussels. Ushakov has previously been the mayor of Riga. National Alliance (ECR) received over 16% and will also send two MEPs – Roberts Zile and Dace Melbarde. Zile has been an MEP since 2004, holding the position of Vice-Chair of the TAX3 Committee. He is also a Member of the European Parliament's transport committee and is considered to be an influential member of the ECR group. Melbarde has been the Minister of Culture in Latvia for the past five years.

Latvian Russian Union (Greens) has gained over 6% and will send Tatjana Zdanoka to Brussels; the party is very pro-Russian, and therefore pro-Kremlin. The last seat will go to Ivars Jabs, who represents Development / For! (A/P) Party (Unaffiliated). He is seen as one of the most respected academics and politicians in Latvia.





LITHUANIA

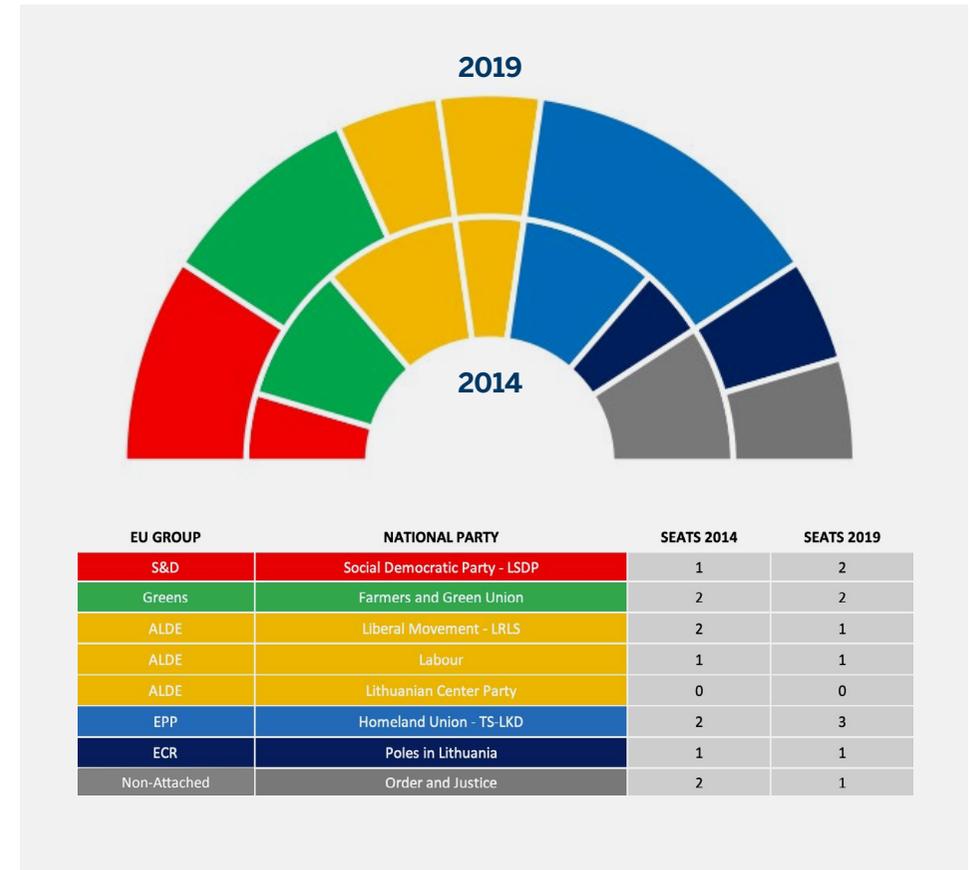
TRADITIONAL PARTIES REMAIN STRONG

There were a total of 11 seats being contested in Lithuania. Five out of eleven current Lithuanian MEPs will be returning to Brussels. Overall the campaign was rather low key.

The biggest winners of the elections are the traditional centre parties. The Homeland Union (TS-LKD) secured over 18% of the vote and increased its position to three seats. Meanwhile the Social Democrats secured 15% and retained its two as well. These parties will be sending their senior political heavy weights to Brussels, which will include Andrius Kubilius (EPP, former Prime Minister), Rasa Juknevičienė (EPP, former Minister of Defence) and Juozas Olekas (S&D, former Minister of Defence and Healthcare). The governing Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union had expected to secure four seats, but only received 12% of votes and therefore only secured two seats. Three seats will be shared between the Labour Party (ALDE) (8.5%), Liberal Movement (ALDE) (6%) and Christian Families Alliance (ECR) (5%) with one each. The only non-party movement list that won a seat to the European Parliament is the “Train of Aušra Maldeikienė Movement” who secured 6.1 % of the vote, promoting liberal messages that mirror Emanuel Macron’s En Marche movement.

One face that will not be returning to Brussels is Former MEP Antanas Guoga who was very active in the media, having changed political parties. However he failed to reach the needed threshold and therefore lost his seat. No anti-EU party won seats and the most anti-EU voices failed to have any real impact, putting the country at odds with some of its neighbours and large parts of the rest of the EU.

The European Parliament elections coincided with the second round of presidential elections. Both candidates were pro-European but Lithuanians elected Gitanas Nausėda, a former banker, over Ingrida Šimonytė, a former Minister of Finance. Consequently Lithuania's political direction will not be changing and will remain strongly pro-European.





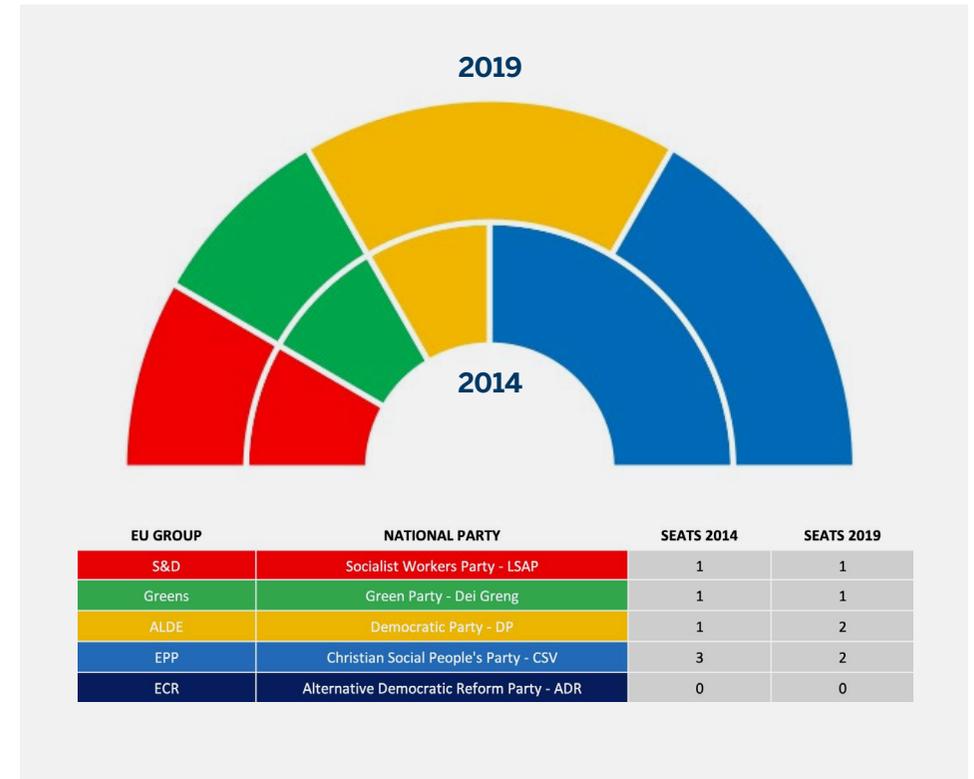
LUXEMBOURG

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS WIN RACE AND ONE MORE SEAT

Six seats were being contested in Luxembourg, the country with the strongest support for the EU among all Member States. It also registered the highest turnout of voters with 84%. Prime Minister Xavier Bettel's Liberal Democratic Party (ALDE) was the main winner with over 21% of the vote, up nearly 7% compared to the previous European elections. The win secured the Liberal Democrats two seats in the European Parliament, taking one seat from the Christian Socialist Party (EPP), the party of current European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, which is now down to two seats. This is the only significant shift compared with 2014. The Greens have come third with minimal gains at almost 19%, securing one seat, as did the socialist LSAP, which made minimal gains, and which also retains one seat in the European Parliament. The Left, the Communist Party of Luxembourg (KPL), The Pirate Party and the Alternative Democratic Reform Party (ADR) (ECR) all failed to win any seats.

The Liberal Democrats have declared climate change as an absolute priority in its Party manifesto but opposes further enlarging the European Union unless new mechanisms are developed that can swiftly and effectively sanction countries that fail to respect common fundamental values. For the Party, Europe must be more united, more social and more liberal. The welfare of citizens is at the heart of its policy priorities.

Luxembourg's political landscape has seen little change since World War II and with the highest GDP in Europe, anything else would be surprising. The tax scandals of recent years have not left a lasting impression on the voters, who seem happy with a broad consensus across the political spectrum. The Grand Duchy often punches above its weight in Brussels and manages to place influential politicians in key positions, including three previous Commission Presidents. However, currently there is no one on the political horizon. It remains to be seen who will fill the vacancies left by Juncker and some heavy weight MEPs.





MALTA

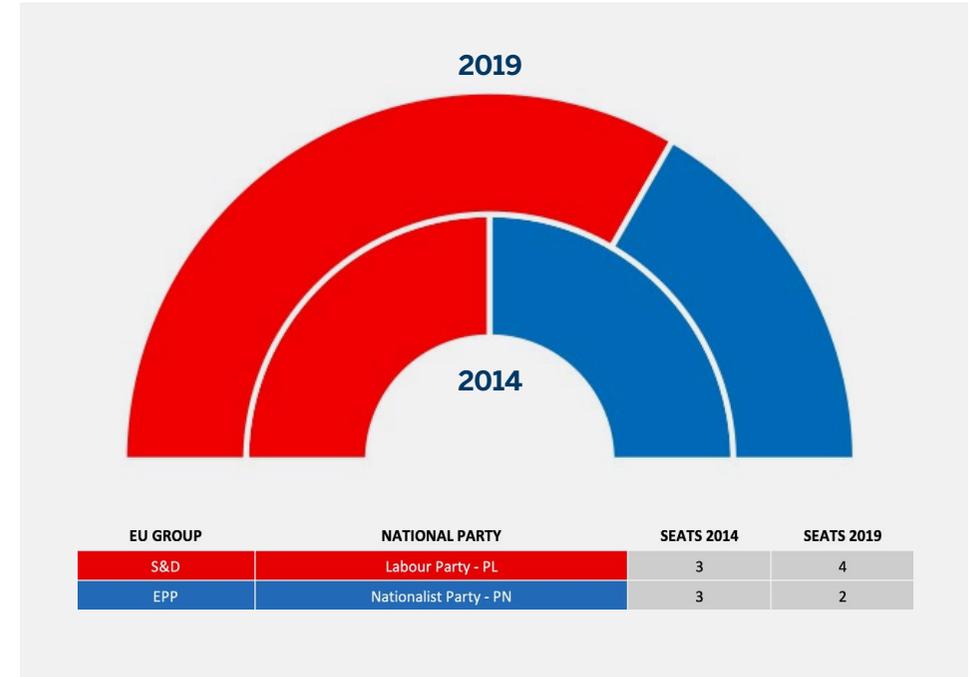
RULING PARTY RISES FURTHER

Though Malta traditionally has one of the lowest abstention rates among EU Member States, turnout in 2019 bucked the overall EU trend by seeing a slight reduction to 72% (from 75% in 2014).

Malta's six seats will no longer be perfectly split, as they were, between the country's two main political parties: the ruling centre-left Labour Party now has four seats to the two held by the opposition, centre-right Nationalist party. Maltese media therefore consider the 2019 vote a landslide victory for Labour Party leader and current Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, serving his second term after re-election with a significant majority in 2017. Under Muscat's stewardship, Malta has pushed through reforms such as the recognition of same-sex marriage.

Malta has not experienced a surge in extremist parties that translated into European Parliament seats. However, far-right Imperium Europa, standing to unite all European natives under one flag, won 3.2% of the electorate's support.

Representing the ruling Labour party (S&D), Miriam Dalli and Alfred Sant keep their seats. Josianne Cutajar and Alex Agius Saliba will be serving their first terms. For the opposition Nationalist party, part of the EPP group, both seats are taken by incumbent MEPs Roberta Metsola and David Casa.





NETHERLANDS

THE TIMMERMANS EFFECT OVERSHADOWS THE CLASH ON THE RIGHT

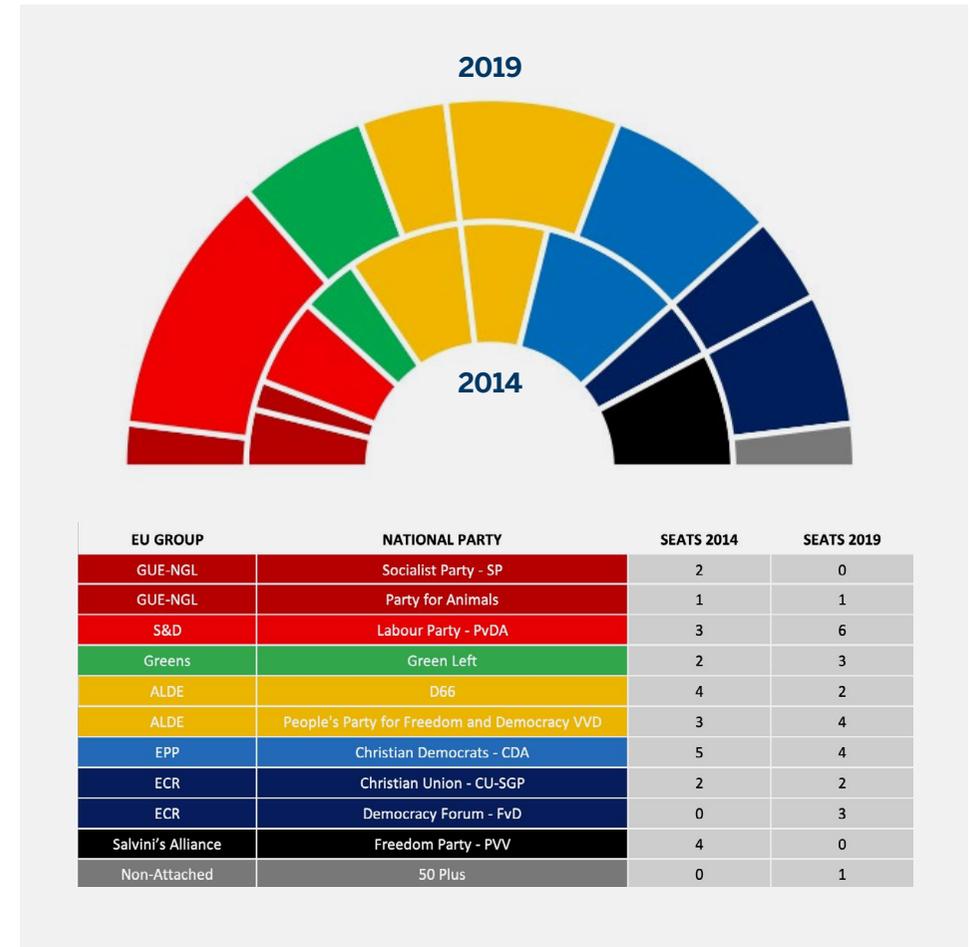
In an outcome that defied the polls, Dutch voters have chosen experience over disruption. With the highest voter turnout since 1979 (still relatively low at 41.8%), Frans Timmermans has unexpectedly led the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA, S&D) to a win in the elections.

In a fragmented political environment (the 26 EP seats are divided amongst ten parties), the Spitzenkandidat and European Commission presidential hopeful managed to lead the Labour Party to a victory, despite most of the campaign coverage being focused on the clash on the right and polls predicting a tight battle between the Liberals of PM Rutte and Forum for Democracy. This political nationalist newcomer with two seats in the Dutch parliament, had recently become biggest in the provincial elections and as a consequence, the Senate. The growth of Forum for Democracy led Geert Wilders' PVV to revert to a more extreme anti-EU position, even calling for 'Nexit'. As on previous occasions, this does not resonate with the Dutch, and will see the PVV leaving the EP after losing all four of its seats.

The 'Timmerman effect' is at the expense of other left-wing and centre-left parties (the Socialist Party and Lib Dems D66 both lost seats); voters chose the experienced politician with a pro-European course, keeping his hopes for Commission President alive.

Forum for Democracy will come into the EP with three seats, but defied polls by not even coming close to winning the elections. They had to settle for 4th largest party, after the Labour party, Liberals (VVD, ALDE) and the Christian Democrats (CDA, EPP). This is despite appearing in the last big televised debate the day before the elections between the leader of the Forum, Thierry Baudet, and Prime Minister Rutte. Other parties had criticised this right-wing debate as falsely giving the impression of having a choice between centre-right and far-right. The voter clearly saw things differently. In addition to Forum not being able to repeat their national win two months earlier, its win was off-set by a larger loss of seats by Geert Wilders' Freedom Party. Compared to five years before, the far right therefore actually decreased its share of the vote, on balance.

Another notable outcome is the poor performance of D66 (ALDE), the most pro-EU party, which had won the previous EU elections but now drops from four to two seats. This might have to do with D66 being in a centre right government and with their leadership change from heavyweight Alexander Pechtold to the less experienced Rob Jetten. Another Dutch Spitzenkandidat, Bas Eickhout of the Greens, won one seat compared to 2014 but has not capitalised on the growth of the party at a national level.



After Brexit, the Netherlands will gain three extra seats in the European Parliament. These will go to the Liberals (VVD, increasing to five), the Greens (Groenlinks, increasing to four) and will see the Freedom Party of Wilders regain one seat in the EP.



POLAND

HISTORIC TURNOUT CONFIRMS DEEP POLITICAL DIVISIONS AND STRONG SUPPORT FOR CURRENT GOVERNMENT

Based on initial results, Poland continues to be a deeply divided society. On the upside turnout increased considerably, climbing to over 45%, compared to the 24% achieved in 2014.

The biggest success was that achieved by the ruling-party (PiS) which secured nearly 46% of the vote securing 27 seats. The main opposition block, which comprises a number of other parties under the banner European Coalition (Koalicja Europejska) became second with just over 38% and 22 seats. The liberal pro-European Spring Party (Wiosna) received 6% with three seats.

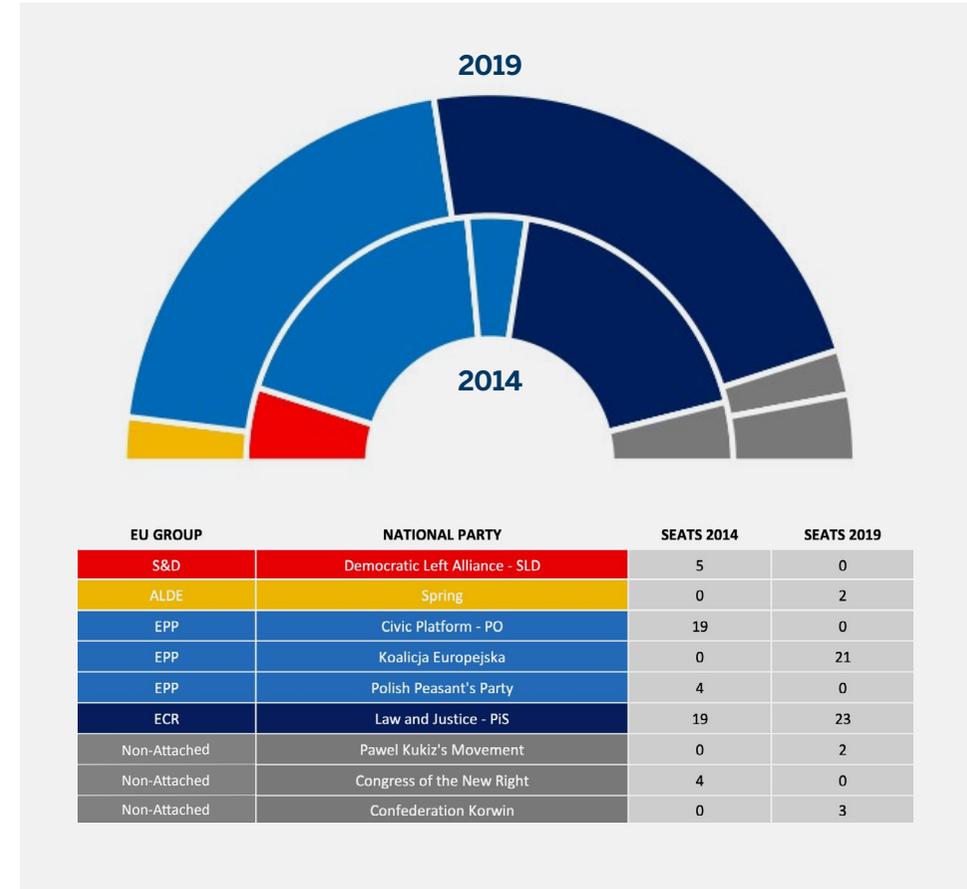
The biggest surprise has been the support given to the far-right Confederation Party (Konfederacja) with 4.5% which has positioned itself as a clear rival to the Government, competing for the hearts and minds of the most conservative and far-right elements of the electorate. Questions remain over its close connections with Russia. However, despite its success, it failed to pass the minimal threshold and will not have any MEPs this time round.

With three political groups entering the European Parliament, it can be expected that the seats will spread out mainly amongst the ECR, EPP, S&D, ALDE. Overall, the exit polls published ahead of the elections underestimated the still very strong political support the current government still enjoys, especially in rural areas.

The initial results of the European elections also once again confirmed the geographical split between the East, a natural stronghold for the PiS party, and West, where the more liberal and cosmopolitan electorate is located. However, the next political test for Poland will come in the autumn and whether the European Coalition will be able to challenge the ruling government-party PiS in the general elections.

Brussels has already indicated that the appointment of the next Commission might be delayed on purpose, in order for a potential new Polish government to nominate a more pro-European Commission candidate after the autumn elections.

Elsewhere there is continued speculation that Donald Tusk, the current European Council President, will return to Polish politics in order to provide support and advice to the European Coalition and eventually to run in Poland's Presidential elections scheduled for spring of 2020.





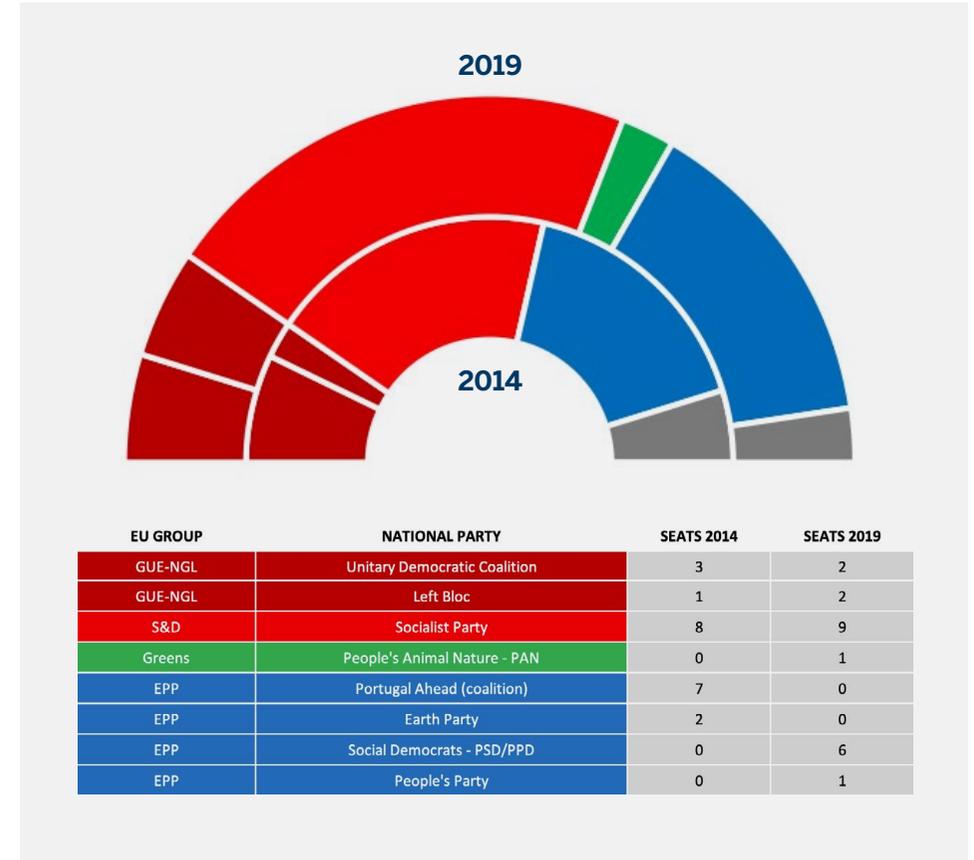
PORTUGAL

THE SOCIALIST PARTY WINS DESPITE FALLING ATTENDANCE

Seventeen political parties contested the 21 seats available in Portugal in 2019. The changes introduced to the electoral law last year have not been effective as results show a lower turnout than in the previous elections, already considered the worst in the history of Portuguese democracy, with an estimated abstention rate of 70%.

The elections in Portugal were seen partly as a legislative primary and a test for Prime Minister Costa (PS), whose party has made the biggest gains. The Socialist Party obtained more than a third of the popular vote (33.5%), securing nine MEP seats (S&D), far ahead of the centre-right PSD, with just over 22% of support, down from almost 28% five years ago. This is a significant defeat for the PSD, which has now registered its worst result ever in both national and European elections. Nevertheless, it will still be able to deliver six seats (EPP), in addition to another seat from the Christian Democrat CDS-PP, the fifth political force, which secured just over 6% of the vote.

The third political force is the left block and government partner Bloco de Esquerda (BE) with almost 10% of the votes, doubling the results achieved in 2014 and overtaking the communist/eco-socialist alliance PCP-PEV (UCD- Unitary Democratic Coalition) by 3% of the votes. Despite the exchange of positions, both parties will have two seats each. The surprise of the night is that the PAN party (People-Animals-Nature) will be able to enter the European Parliament and elect one MEP that will likely join the Greens. This is a first for Portugal. Otherwise the country contrasts with the rest of Europe in that populism and extreme right movements have failed to achieve very much.





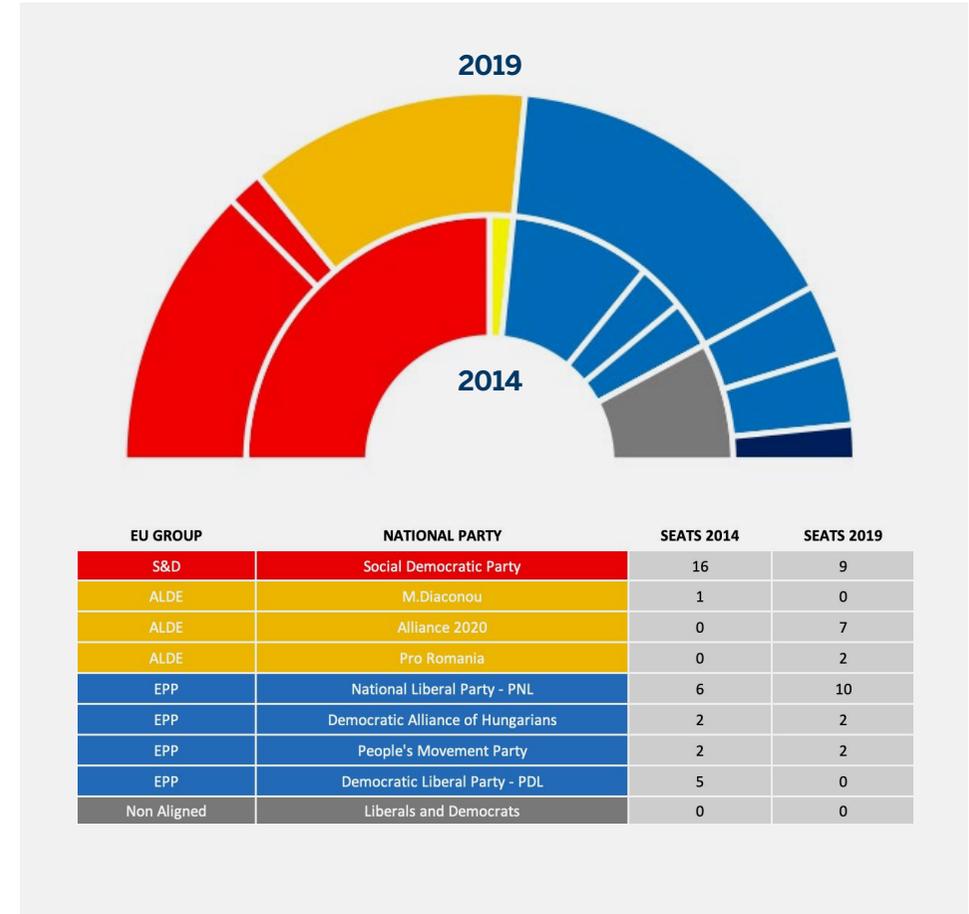
ROMANIA

A DEMONSTRABLY PRO-EUROPEAN VOTE, PRO-JUSTICE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

Romanians voted alongside a referendum called by President Klaus Iohannis on two issues related to the judiciary system. Turnout for voting was significantly higher than in previous elections for the European Parliament, reaching almost 50%, as new parties sought to benefit by getting more people out to vote.

Exit poll results show a victory for the opposition and pro-justice European parties, alongside a massive vote for the pro-justice referendum. The biggest winners were The National Liberal Party (PNL) securing almost 28% of votes and ten seats, with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) securing over 6% of votes and the People`s Movement Part (PMP) getting over 5%, giving both parties two seats each. PNL, as well as UDMR and PMP are part of the EPP group and together got fourteen seats. The ruling Romanian Social and Democrats (PSD) Party secured just under 25% of the votes and nine seats, down from the sixteen it had in 2014.

Save Romania Union & Romania Together (Alliance 2020) secured 18% of votes and seven seats and PRO Romania (PRP) secured almost 7% of votes and two seats, both parties being part of ALDE + En Marche. Romanians living abroad also voted in high numbers with extremely long queues forming in major European cities even before polls opened on Sunday morning. Some living in the diaspora - Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris and London - queued for up to eight hours. Reports suggest not all of them were able to cast their ballot before voting stations closed. This caused a lot of anger due to the lack of resources allocated to ensure everyone had the opportunity.





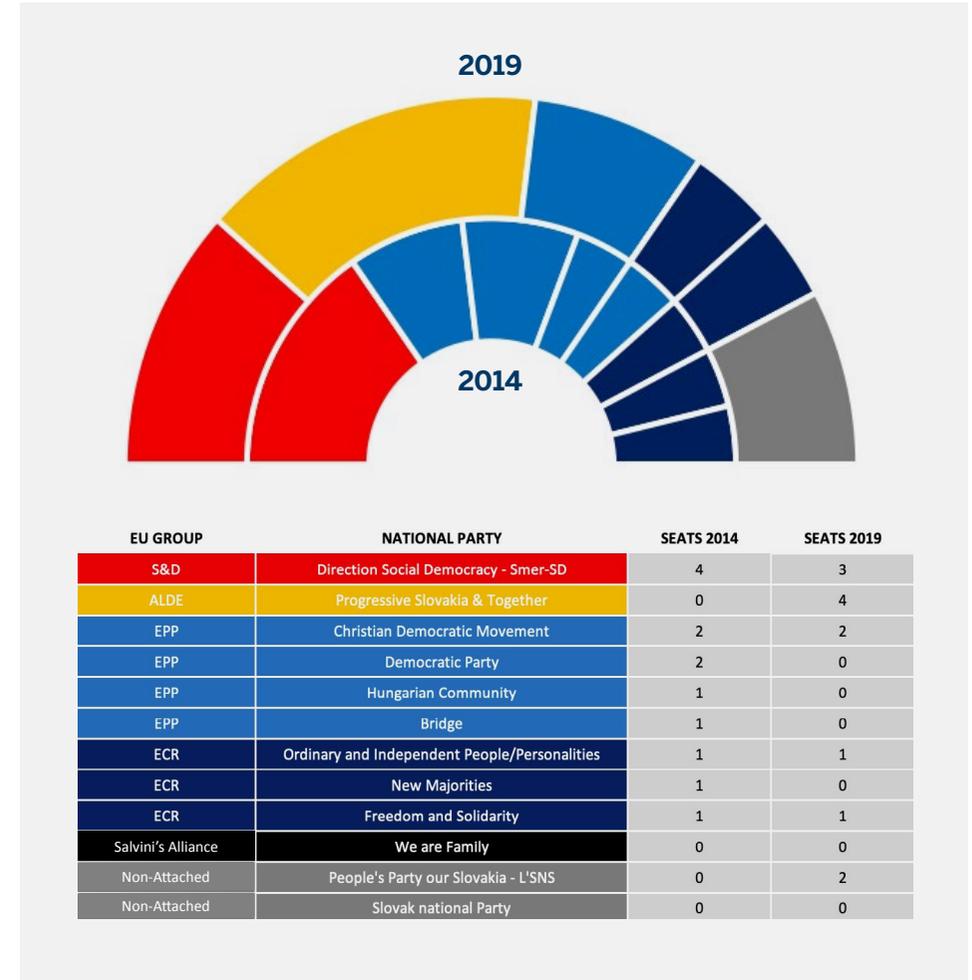
SLOVAKIA

A STRONG PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT KEEPS EUROSCEPTICS AT BAY

The good news is that Slovakia could increase its turnout from a rather dismal 13.1% in 2014 to a marginally improved 20% this time around. The bad news for the EU is that Eurosceptics and neo-fascist LSNS have partly benefitted. However, Slovakia has seen some consolidation and will send MEPs from fewer political parties compared to 2014, as many failed to overcome the 5% hurdle. While the 5% threshold prevented a further fragmentation of the Slovakian political landscape (in 2014 the thirteen seats were split across eight parties) the fact that the seats of the liberal coalition are split between a liberal (ALDE) party and a conservative (EPP) party makes the whole picture very confusing.

After its recent Presidential election, Slovakia is also bucking the regional trend in who it votes for. The strongest single party remains the governing SMER (S&D) of Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic, but support is waning, winning just under 16% of the vote which translates into three seats. However, the SMER falls behind a coalition of two liberal parties: the pro-European Progressives of the newly elected President Zuzana Čaputová, and the Together & Civic Democracy. They gained 20% of the vote and secured four seats. LSNS secured 12% as the third strongest party with two seats and continues to advocate for an exit from the EU. The conservative Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), was fourth with nearly 10% and two seats. The remaining two seats are split between two parties that are part of the ECR, namely Freedom and Solidarity and the Group of Ordinary People and Independent Personalities. We are Family and the Slovak National Party who previously had one seat each will not send any MEPs this time around.

Slovakia has traditionally not been enthusiastic about Europe. The financial crisis in 2009 followed by the migration crisis disillusioned many Slovaks even further. The murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his girlfriend, which led to the resignation of Prime minister Fico, increased public mistrust in the political system. Hence it could have been much worse. For now the Europe friendly forces around Zuzana Čaputová could hold the Eurosceptics at bay.





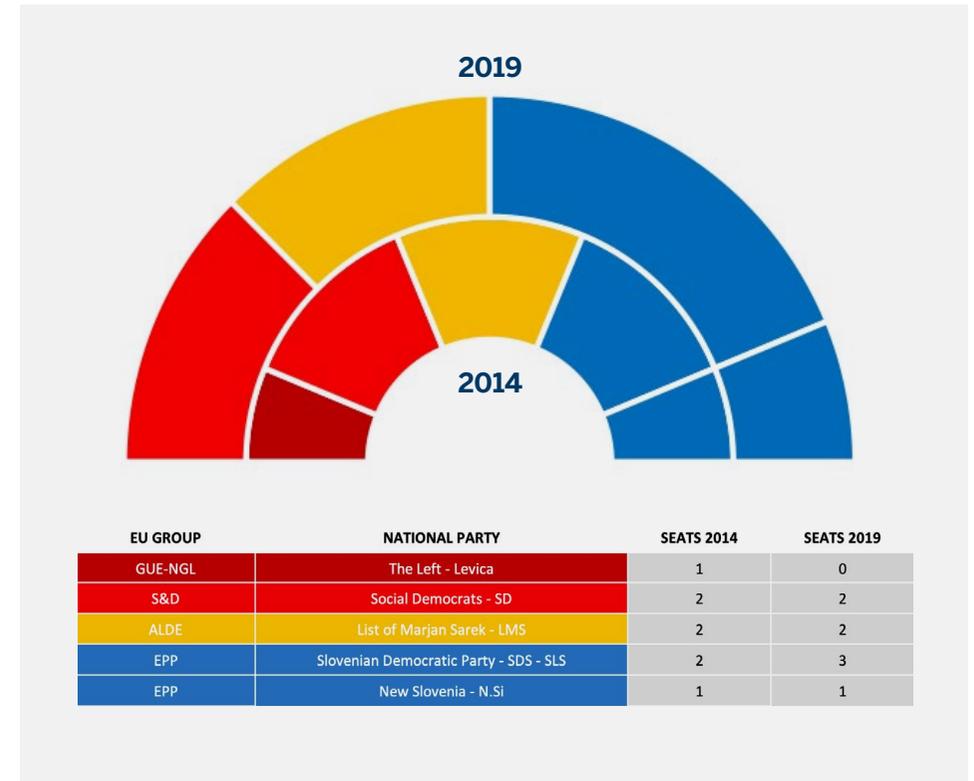
SLOVENIA

NO ENTHUSIASM FOR EUROPE

SDS (part of EPP) won the elections and will have three MEPs. While they won the national elections in 2018, they could not form a majority and are the main opposition party. Their move to the right with its focus on an anti-immigration agenda was welcomed by its supporters.

The two governing parties, SD (part of S&D) and LMS (party of the current Prime Minister and part of ALDE) will have two mandates both. Finally, NSI (Christian Democrats, also part of EPP) will have one MEP. NSI managed to profile themselves as a centre right political force, largely moving into space previously occupied by SDS. The New Left, which just signed an agreement to support the minority government did not manage to get a seat with just 6% of the votes. In terms of potential Committee preference, the left centre MEPs are focused on social and foreign policy. SDS is more interested in agriculture and regional funds.

Turnout was low, around 28%, the second lowest turnout this year after Slovakia.





SPAIN

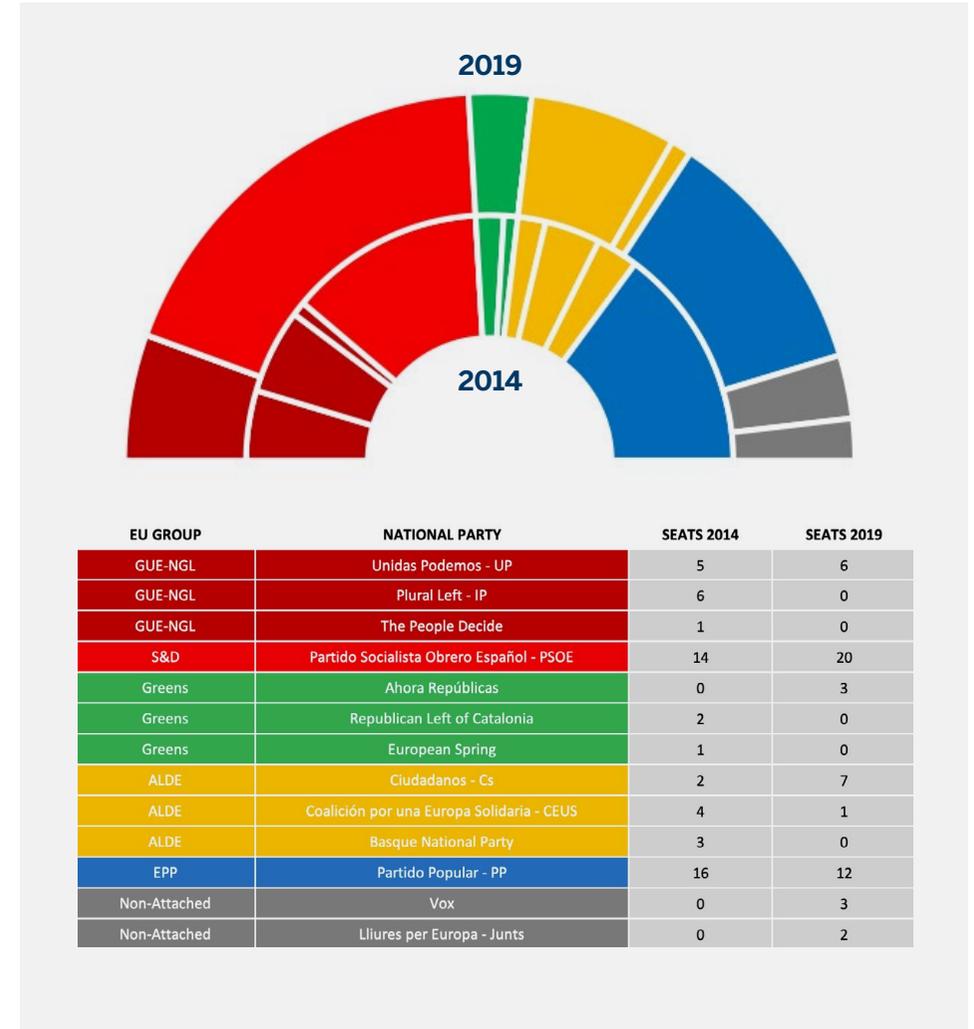
TURNS TO THE LEFT... AGAIN

Spain saw one of the highest turnouts in Europe with 64% of eligible voters casting a ballot in the European elections, up from 46% in 2014. This may have been helped by the fact that they were held simultaneously with regional elections, in twelve autonomous communities, and local elections throughout the country (the so-called Super Sunday). The Socialist Party (PSOE) won in all three, building on from its general election victory, albeit without a parliamentary majority, on 28 April 2019.

At the European level, the socialist victory was even bigger, obtaining 20 of the 54 seats (up from fourteen seats in 2014). The Conservative Party (PP) continues to lose support, obtaining only twelve seats this time, compared to the sixteen seats it achieved in 2014. The Liberal Party (Ciudadanos) obtained seven seats (five more than in 2014), surpassing Spain's far-left coalition (Unidas Podemos), which obtained six seats (five seats in 2014). The new far-right party (Vox) secured its first seats, winning three overall, far less than some predicted. The far-left coalition of Catalans and Basques (Ahora Repúblicas; ERC & EH Bildu) obtained three seats. Carles Puigdemont's Catalan nationalist coalition (Junts) obtained two seats. Finally, the coalition of other nationalist parties (CEUS; including Basque PNV), obtained one seat.

Once the UK leaves the EU, five additional seats will be allocated to Spain (59 in total). The Spanish government stated that each of the following parties will obtain an extra seat: Socialists (PSOE); Conservatives (PP); Liberals (Ciudadanos); far-right (Vox); and far-left Catalans (Ahora Repúblicas).

Overall, there has been a Socialist boom in all recent Spanish elections. However, a far-right party from Spain has entered the European Parliament for the first time, a major step change in Spanish politics given the Franco legacy and one mirrored at the national level.





SWEDEN

TRADITIONAL CENTRE PARTIES RETAIN BALANCE, WHILE GREENS LOSE OUT

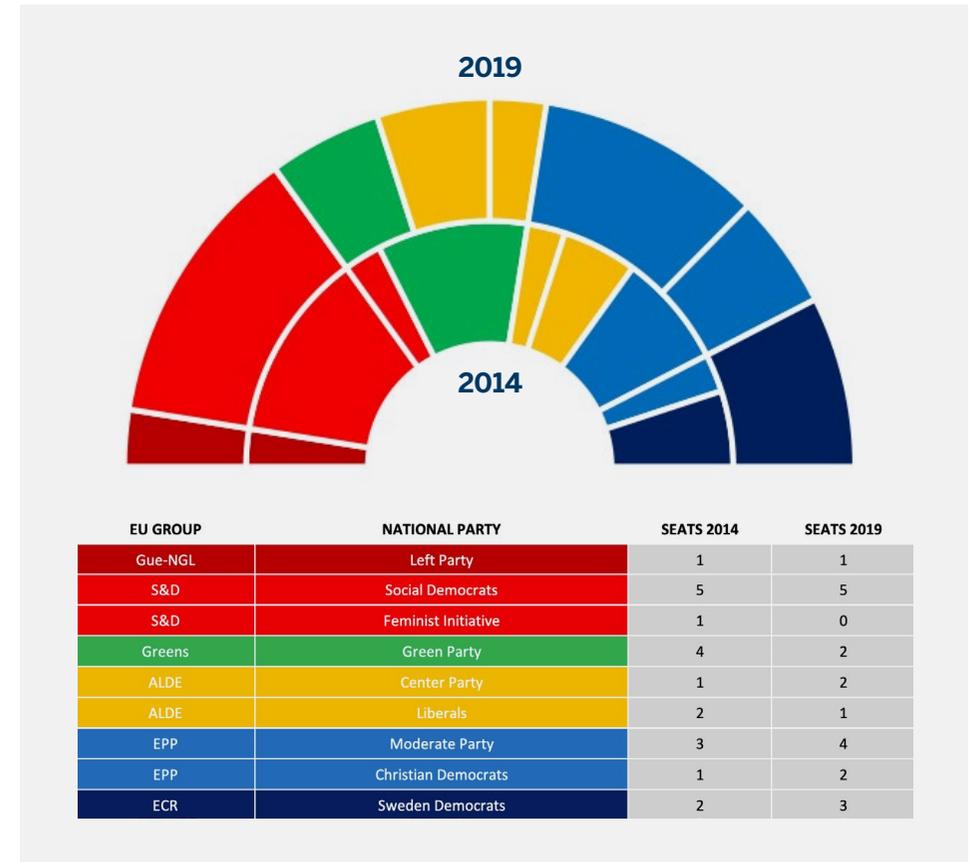
The Sweden Democrats (ECR) were the big winners. Its share of the vote increased by more than 5% giving it a total of three seats despite being tainted by scandals in the weeks running up to the election. The Social Democrats (S&D) however remain the largest party with five seats, closely followed by the Moderate party (EPP) with four seats – one seat up since the last election. The Centre Party (ALDE) and the Christian Democrats (EPP) also did reasonably well and will end up with two seats respectively. The Left party (GUE) keeps a single seat. At the other end of the spectrum, the Greens lost two seats and now have two remaining. The Liberal party (ALDE) was close to not making it past the threshold but in the end managed to win a sole seat. Feminist Initiative (S&D) lost its only seat.

For the first time since Sweden joined the EU in 1995 the debate preceding the election did not focus on whether to remain in the EU or not. The Sweden Democrats and the Left Party have both gone from calling for a Swedish exit from the EU to 'reforming it from the inside'. Instead, climate, refugee and security policies were the hottest topics in the discussions leading up to the election.

In principle all parties agree that climate policy is one of the key policy issues where the EU should do more. However, this could clash with the Swedish tradition of being reluctant to give national powers over to the EU. Despite the focus on climate and environment, the Greens did not do very well in Sweden. This could be explained by the fact that other parties are doing more to address the issue or it could be as a consequence of the party being part of the minority coalition government with the Social Democrats.

Following the refugee crisis and the high proportion of refugees who were welcomed by Sweden compared to other EU member states, Swedish parties have called for more responsibility to be taken by other countries. Social Democratic Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has been advocating for a quota system in Council in recent years without success and it remains unlikely that Swedish MEPs will be able to influence this process.

The Moderate Party based its campaign on security and crime issues, which was later picked up by other parties. It has been calling for criminals from EU Member States to be transferred to their home country to serve their respective prison sentences and for the EU to push back harder on organised crime. Like the push on climate policy, it will be interesting to see how this potentially clashes with the tradition of restricting power to the EU. It was only recently, for example, that the Social Democratic/Green Government choose to sign up to the creation of a European Public Prosecutor's Office.



Almost all parties choose to put new names up as MEP candidates. Out of Sweden's 20 MEPs, 16 will be new to the European Parliament. Former heavyweights such as the Liberal's Cecilia Wikström and the Moderate party's Gunnar Hökmark will not stay on for the upcoming mandate. Among the new faces who will join the Swedish delegation to the EP, will be some well-known national politicians such as Tomas Tobé (former Party Secretary for the Moderate party), Sara Skyttedal (former Chair for the Young Christian Democrats) and Alice Bah Kuhnke (former Minister for Culture and Democracy). Time will tell whether they will be able to have the same kind of influence as their predecessors.



UNITED KINGDOM

HARD BREXIT AND HARD REMAIN ARE BIG WINNERS. CONSERVATIVES AND LABOUR BIG LOSERS

The Brexit Party (31.6%) is the clear winner in these elections. The Liberal Democrats came second with over 20%, comfortably ahead of the Labour Party (over 14%). The Green Party (over 12%) also made significant gains. The ruling Conservatives come in fifth place, with just over 9% of the vote. Overall turnout was up slightly (+1.8%) compared to 2014, to 36.7%.

The election was touted by some as a de facto second referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. The UK appears as divided as it was 3 years ago when it voted by 52% to 48% to leave the Union.

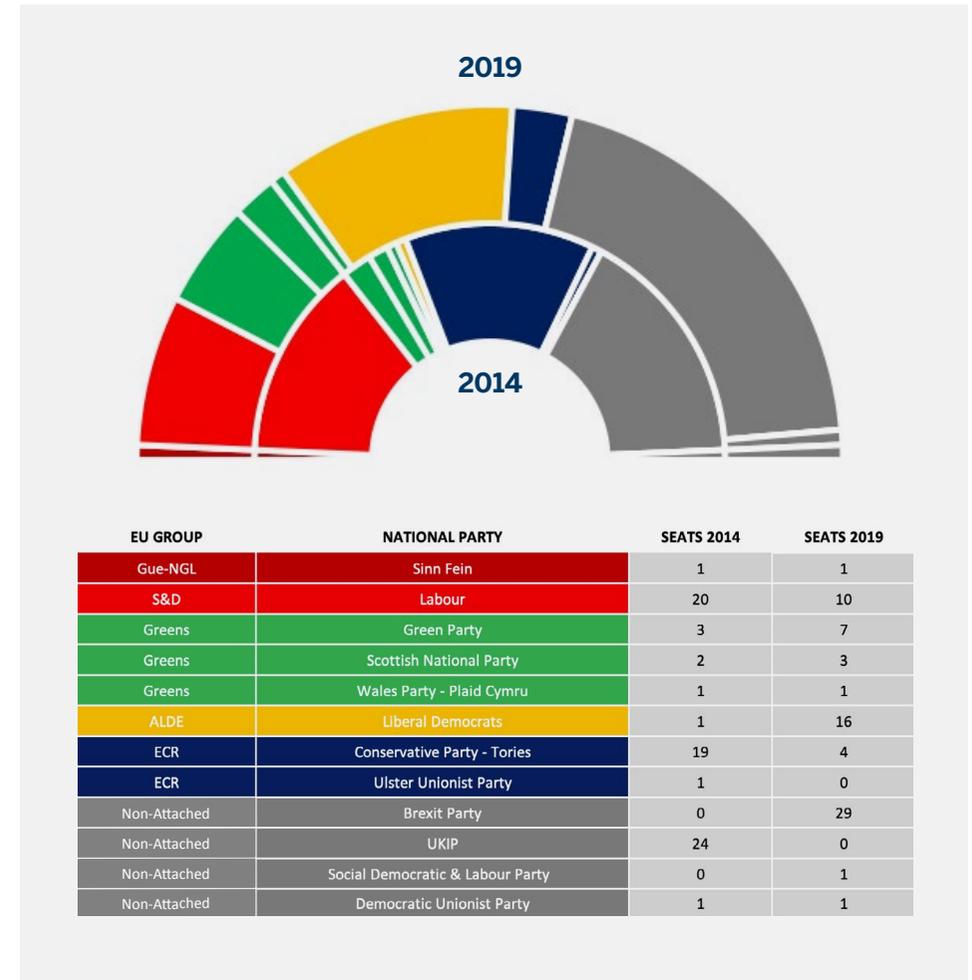
The governing Conservative Party (ECR) were the big losers in this election, haemorrhaging votes primarily to Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party which has now effectively replaced the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) as the voice of Brexit, given the latter has lost all its MEPs.

It was an (almost) equally terrible night for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party (S&D), whose significant pro-Remain voter base appears to have lost patience with the Party's ambiguous Brexit policy, deserting them for the Liberal Democrats (ALDE), the Greens (Greens/EFA) and the newly-formed Change UK.

Beyond the headline figures, the performance of Farage's Brexit Party must be put into context. Votes for anti-Brexit parties, which include the Liberal Democrats, Greens, the Scottish Nationalists, Change UK and Plaid Cymru in Wales, accounted for 40.3% of the total vote. This compares to the 36.7% secured by both Brexit and UKIP parties. However, given a further 23.4% voted for Labour and the Conservatives and their muddled approach, the issue is far less clear.

Prime Minister Theresa May has already paid the price for failing to deliver her Brexit strategy, announcing she would resign as leader of the Tory Party from 7th June. Based on these election results, the forthcoming Conservative Party leadership race, which is decided by the Party's heavily Leave-voting membership, is likely to deliver a new Prime Minister who is willing to take the UK out of the EU without a deal.

This was an election that rewarded parties with a clear message on Brexit – whether for Remain or for a hard Brexit. The message for the two main Parties appears to be to come off the fence, or risk splitting your respective parties. Despite all the changing seats, ultimately very little has changed in a country that remains bitterly divided over its future in Europe.





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