



2019 European Parliament Elections



THE FIPRA PAN-EU ANALYSIS

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Founded in 2000, Fipra has since expanded across the globe and now operates in over 50 countries internationally.

In Europe, we are the only consultancy with top level public affairs advisers not only in Brussels, but throughout each of the 28 Member States of the European Union.

We also have experienced public affairs advisers in a number of European Economic Area countries and EU candidate countries, as well as many of the EU's neighbouring countries.

Many of our people have personal experience of having served in the EU institutions, national governments, parliaments and regulatory bodies.

This report on the outcome of the European Parliament elections in May 2019 draws on the combined experience of Fipra International's staff in Brussels and experts from our wider network across the whole of the European Union.

For further information on this report, please contact us at eptaskforce@fipra.com.

Foreword

ROBERT MADELIN
CHAIRMAN, FIPRA INTERNATIONAL



Welcome to Fipra's round-up and analysis of one of the most important European Union elections in recent years.

The European Parliament now taking office faces an unprecedented range of disruption – global, regional and internal.

How will the centre parties combine to steer and hold a course out of the perfect storm? Will hitherto fragmented fringe parties become a political and policy force? Will Europe truly flourish in the years ahead?

These pages aim to offer guidance at a crucial moment in the political transition.

How will the centre parties combine to steer and hold a course out of the perfect storm?

Will hitherto fragmented fringe parties become a political and policy force?

I am proud of the depth and agility of our network of public affairs experts across the 28 Member States of the European Union, each with their own well-established local presence and each experienced in the politics of their country. This report brings together their combined analysis, alongside the view from Brussels, providing extensive insight.

We have sought to provide a discerning and comprehensive overview of the results of the European Parliament elections and what they will mean for Europe going forward, but the way ahead is, of course, always subject to new political and economic developments.

We shall be delighted to deepen and customise our perspective for individual needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Madelin'.

Overview

PETER-CARLO LEHRELL
CHAIRMAN, FIPRA NETWORK



"The Centre holds" – if only narrowly.

The rise of populist and non-centrist parties has fallen short of ending domination of the European Parliament by more centrist political groups. Yet the closeness of the overall results is likely to lead to increased political manoeuvring. New coalitions and informal groupings will be needed more than ever before if EU policy goals are to be achieved.

The 2019 European Parliament elections are the most important EU-wide elections ever to have taken place. Previous EP elections have tended to attract a relatively low turn-out of voters and have often been as much about domestic issues as European ones.

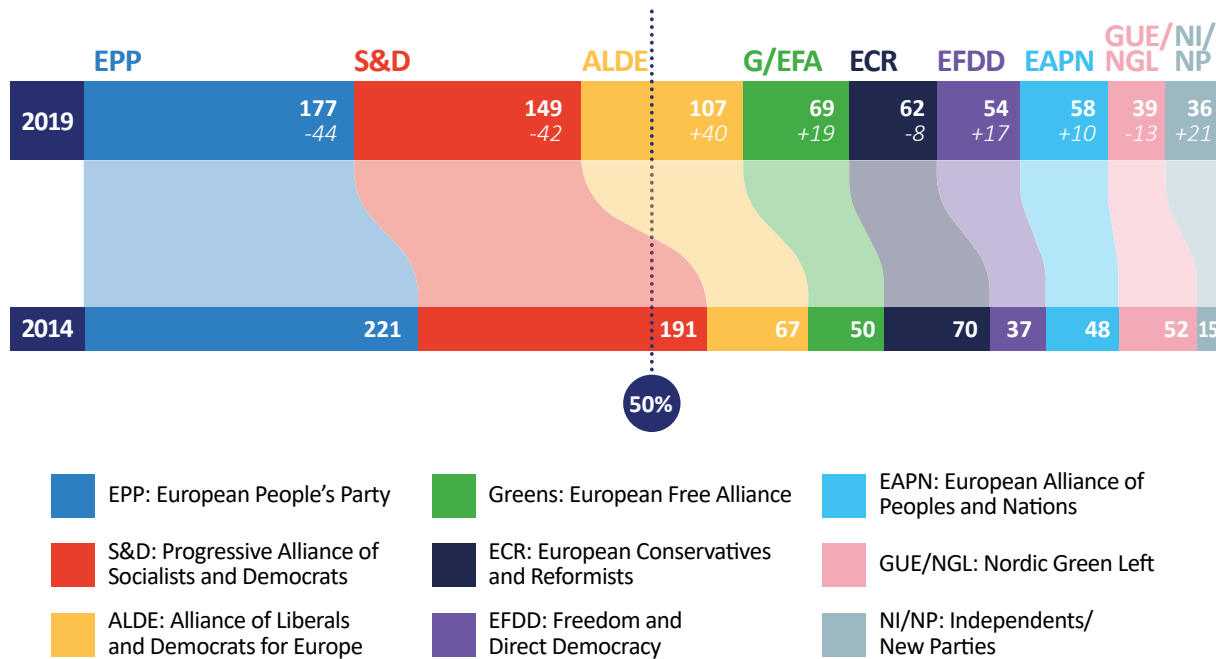
These elections have been different.

With a turn-out of voters of over 50% across the EU as a whole - the highest for 25 years - these elections focused more than ever before on the many different views about what the EU should be. Taking place at a time of uncertainty about the European project, they pitted the mainstream, pro-EU centrist parties against a kaleidoscope of populist, green, right-wing and left-wing critics – who all want to see major changes.

Consequently, much of the initial focus has been on the success of the populist and non-centrist parties, many of which succeeded to a greater extent than before

in an EU-wide vote. From the success of the National Rally in France, beating President Macron's centrist group into second place (albeit by less than 1% of the vote), the record high result for the right-wing League party in Italy, to the victories of the national-conservative parties in Hungary and in Poland, or indeed the first-place finish of the new Brexit Party in the UK - still an EU Member State at least for now - the populist and eurosceptic parties have never had a better result.

Yet in the overall analysis, despite their successes, the main result of these elections is that the centre has held. The previously simple joint dominance of the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) and Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) may have ended, but the EPP remains the largest group in the new Parliament – and the success of the strongly pro-EU Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) provides the basis for renewed centrist control over the Parliament, even if with some changes.



Source: European Parliament in collaboration with Kantar – Last updated on 28/05/2019

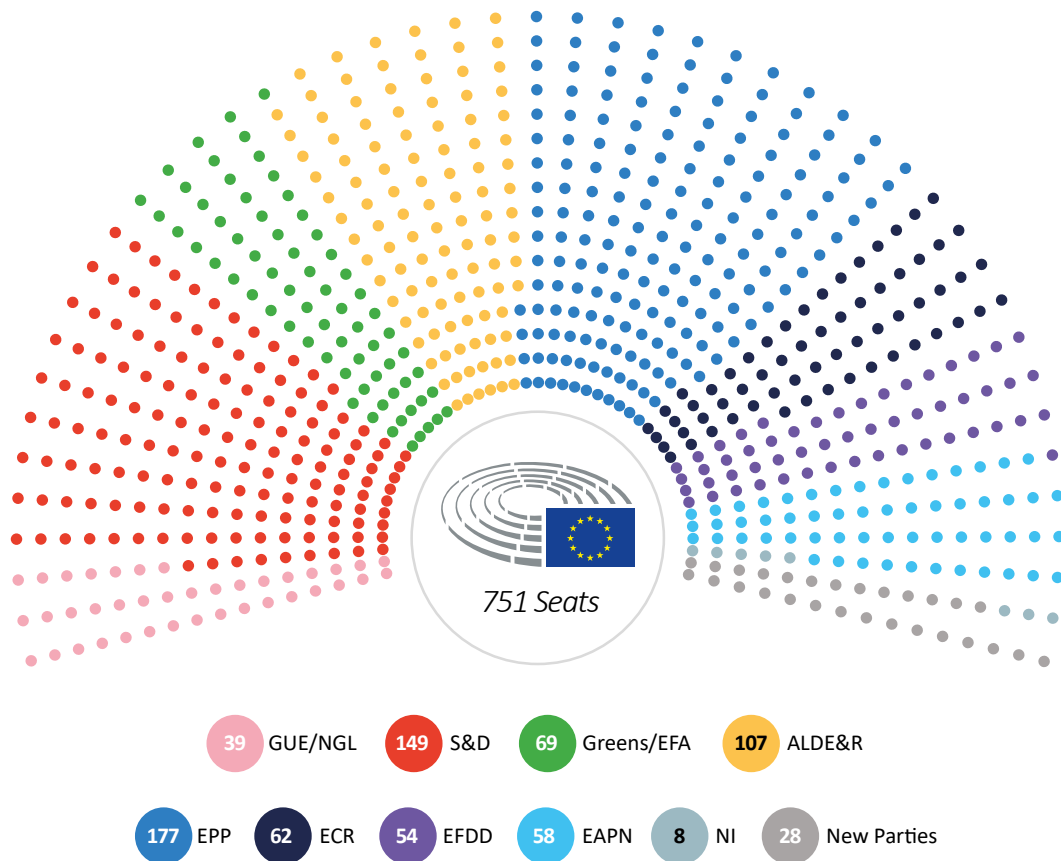
As the above chart shows, perhaps the biggest story from the elections is the rise of the populist and non-centrist parties and the ending of the previous EPP/S&D control over the European Parliament. Yet looked at more closely, the results show a less fundamental change than some had been expecting.

The centre-right parties across Europe have lost ground compared to the previous elections in 2014, particularly in Germany, France and Spain – yet the EPP remains the single largest group.

The populist and Eurosceptic parties have never had a better result. Yet, in the overall analysis, despite their successes, the main result of these elections is that the centre has held.

The S&D Group is also diminished, with a particularly poor performance in Germany and in Italy, but reports of its demise have proved premature, with a relatively strong showing in Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Denmark. The National Rally may have secured first place in France, but President Macron's centrist group did not even exist at the time of the last elections – and his second place, together with relatively good results for liberal parties elsewhere hands ALDE the balance of power in the new Parliament. This will not change even if Hungary's dominant Fidesz party should withdraw its MEPs from the EPP group, nor if the UK does leave the EU and duly loses all its MEPs later this year.

Taken together with the relatively strong performance of the Greens, far from being the end for the pro-EU parties, these results are in fact more likely to see ALDE or the Greens joining forces with the EPP and S&D to push for a renewed set of pro-EU policies, in defiance of the populists, eurosceptics, far-right and far-left parties.



Source: European Parliament in collaboration with Kantar – Last updated on 28/05/2019

Although fairly considerable in number collectively, these different groups come from very different political perspectives and are usually unable to agree a common approach in the Parliament. Already we have seen ALDE's leader, Guy Verhofstadt, welcome the results as "historic" and vow to use his Group's increased influence to push for a "more ambitious Europe".

What might this mean in practice ?

There will have to be some changes, with ALDE pushing for more influence over the top positions in the Parliament and in the EU institutions.

With EU leaders due to meet almost immediately after the elections, one early consequence is likely to be the end of the so-called "spitzenkandidat" system, under which the European Parliament has insisted that the Presidency of the European Commission must go to the candidate of whichever political group comes first in the elections. Strongly disliked by a number of EU leaders, this may not be supported by ALDE, leaving it without a majority in the Parliament and thereby opening up the options for the next Commission President.

It is likely now that the European Council, Commission and ECB presidents will be treated politically by the Council as a package. This would enable the European Council to achieve a balanced outcome in political, geographical and gender terms and not just work to the win for a single top job of a party in Parliament. Thus the election outcome will help to ensure that the heads of state and government take the lead, because they alone are responsible for filling two of the three top jobs.

On policy issues, a less controllable Parliament implies a more limited agenda. Even relatively modest rebellions by national factions within the EPP, S&D and ALDE groups on particular policy issues could deprive them of their overall majority.

With the support of the Greens, however, there is likely to be a renewed push on at least some EU policy agendas, notably for stronger environmental and energy measures, such as the proposed zero emissions target by 2050, as well as renewed demands for more EU-wide taxation powers, including in the digital sector. Demands for a Eurozone-only budget and additional common spending will also continue.

The Greens may also find allies in demanding tougher criteria on labour and environmental standards in any EU trade agreements, and opposing any EU-US trade agreement that could lead to greatly increased market access for US goods or the use of investor dispute settlement procedures. Franco-German led plans for reforms to EU industrial and competition policy to favour selected 'European champions' may also now be difficult to push through.

As for the Populists, their demands and priorities differ widely, but pressure for more flexibility over the existing EU fiscal rules may at least be considered,

as other countries, notably France, struggle to remain within the current limits. Although strongly opposed by the Greens and others, tougher controls over migration and policing of the EU's borders may also be considered by EU leaders in the wake of the elections, in order to stem the appeal of the populist right.

There will be other, more immediate political consequences in some of the individual Member States. The expected poor showing of the Conservative Party in the UK has already helped force the resignation of the British Prime Minister and is likely to boost the chances of a new more Eurosceptic party leader being appointed in the coming weeks.

In Greece, national elections have now been called, following the poor showing of the governing Syriza party in the European elections. The continuing decline of the once dominant SPD in Germany, now the junior partner in the current coalition Government, may in time lead to elections there also. On the other hand, despite the success of League, new elections in Italy seem unlikely given the indifferent performance of its Five Star coalition partner.

Further analysis of these issues can be found in the remainder of this report, with a section on the election results from each of the 28 EU Member States, as provided by our partners and colleagues from across the Fipra network in Europe. I hope you will find it productive reading.

All who voted in such large numbers and observe the outcome can now justly borrow the motto of this year's Venice Biennale: "May you live in interesting times!"

Peter - G. P. P.



Timeline



PARLIAMENT



COUNCIL



COMMISSION

MAY

23-26 MAY
European Parliament Elections

28 MAY

European Council Summit

European leaders to discuss procedures and options for appointment of next President of the Commission and other major EU posts

JUN

2-5 JULY
First Plenary of the newly elected European Parliament
Election of EP President, Vice-Presidents and Questors

21 JUNE

European Council Summit

If nominations are agreed, submitted to EP for ratification

JUL

15-18 JULY
Second Plenary of the newly elected European Parliament
EP vote on Commission President nominees

1 JULY

Start of Finnish Presidency of the European Council

AUG

17 JULY
Composition of European Parliamentary Committees announced

SEP

22-30 JULY
Election of Parliamentary Committee Chairs

SEPTEMBER
European Commission portfolios announced

OCT

EXPECTED OCTOBER
Hearings of Commissioners and European Parliament to vote on Commissioner nominations

NOV

EXPECTED NOVEMBER
European Commission, President and College of Commissioners to take office and begin their work

DEC

EXPECTED DECEMBER
President of the European Council expected to take office



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Austria

The 2019 European Parliament elections in Austria were overshadowed by a large-scale government crisis. In the run-up to election day, it was expected that a corruption scandal* caused by former Vice-Chancellor Strache of the Austrian Freedom Party (EAPN, formerly ENF) would significantly influence the outcome of the election. As the results were published, it was clear that Ibiza-gate did not have a major impact on the Austrian Freedom Party's results, however it led shortly thereafter to the resignation of the vice-chancellor and the formation of a new caretaker Government. Strache however managed to secure a seat in the EP.

The Austrian People's Party (EPP) was the clear winner of the 2019 European election securing 34.5% of the vote, achieving its best result since Austria's entry into the European Union in 1995. Unlike most other members of the European People's Party (EPP), in Austria the party managed to increase their numbers of seats and is now set to send seven instead of five delegates to the European Parliament. Much to everyone's surprise, the Green Party (Greens/EFA) performed far better than the latest polls predicted and with a 14% of the votes elected two MEPs (and will gain one if and when the UK leaves the EU).

It is estimated that the Austrian Freedom Party only lost a relatively small proportion of its vote due to the scandal and it still achieved 17.5% of the vote, only losing one seat. The liberal New Austria and Liberal Forum Party (ALDE) noted only a slight improvement in comparison to their 2014 result and will hold one seat. Until the discovery of the "Ibiza Affair",

the Social Democrats (S&D) were only one percentage point behind the Austrian People's Party. While they were able to secure 23% of the votes, which translates into 5 seats in the EP, it is noteworthy that the Social Democrats failed greatly to capitalise on the downfall of the Austrian Freedom Party. Despite his success in the elections, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz subsequently lost in Parliament a vote of confidence in his Government, which will now be replaced by a caretaker administration appointed by President Alexander van der Bellen.

This will last until – following new elections, which are already planned for September – a new government is sworn in, probably in November/December. In contrast to the other parties, the Austrian People's Party opted for the preferential voting system. The outcome of the no-confidence vote is expected to affect the competition for a Commissioner position. The change already appears to have weakened the chances of MEP Othmar Karas and the current State Secretary in the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, Karoline Edtstadler - previously seen as solid contenders.

**The so-called "Ibiza-gate" corruption scandal engulfed the far-right Austrian Freedom Party shortly before the European elections, leading Chancellor Kurz to dissolve his coalition with the party and call early national elections for the autumn. The scandal forced party leader and then vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache to resign after hidden-camera footage emerged of him offering public contracts in return for campaign help from a fake Russian backer in a villa on the Spanish resort island of Ibiza.*



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Belgium

More than 88% of eligible voters, a high turn-out, went to the polls on 26 May to elect the 21 Belgian MEPs. The participation in and outcome of the European elections in Belgium is to a large extent a reflection of what has happened during the federal and regional elections that took place on the same day. All traditional political families lost ground at regional and federal government level in favour of old and new challengers from the left and right extremes of the political spectrum.

The three most remarkable results of this election are: the rise of the extreme right in Flanders; the further growth of the Greens in the Brussels and Walloon regions; and strong representation of the Workers' Party in parliament, particularly in the Walloon region and at federal state level.

Among the 12 Flemish speaking parties, the extreme right party Flemish First (EAPN, formerly ENF) gained two new seats from the conservative-nationalist New Flemish Alliance (ECR) and the liberals (ALDE) which lost one each.

In addition, a total of eight new MEPs appear to be taking up a mandate for the first time in the next EP term. Only the liberals with MEP Guy Verhofstadt and Hilde Vautmans and the socialist MEP Kathleen Van Brempt were re-elected, together with MEP Gerolf Annemans from the Flemish First party. Several former government members were also elected, including Geert Bourgeois, Kris Peeters and Johan Van Overtveldt.

Among the nine French and German speaking parties in Belgium, the Greens (Greens/EFA) and the Workers' Party (GUE/NGL) both won one seat from the liberals (ALDE) and socialists (S&D). This is the first time in history that a Belgian representative from an extreme left party will take up a seat in the European Parliament.

The May 2019 elections will be regarded in Belgium as a landmark that changed the political landscape quite profoundly.



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Bulgaria

Ruling centre-right party Citizens for European Development (EPP) of Prime Minister Boyko Borissov won the European Parliament elections in Bulgaria, receiving 30.6% of the votes, which translates into 6-7 seats in the European Parliament. The opposition Bulgarian Socialist Party (S&D) came second with 24.6% and 5-6 seats. The predominantly Turkish ethnic minority party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (ALDE) placed third with 15.01% (2-3 seats), while the nationalist Bulgarian National Movement (ECR), which is the junior partner in the centre-right Citizens for European Development's ruling coalition, placed fourth with 7.8% (1-2 seats).

A major question was whether the pro-European coalition Democratic Bulgaria would pass the barrier and send a representative to the European Parliament. With 75% of the ballots counted by May 27, Democratic Bulgaria won 6.82% of the vote and has managed to elect one MEP, allowing a total of five Bulgarian parties to be represented in the next European Parliament. The final distribution of the 17 Bulgarian MEPs will be known on 29 May.

Populist party Volya (EAPN, formerly ENF), the smallest party currently sitting in the national assembly, is among the losers in these elections. The party failed to reach the threshold with 3.5% of the vote, and so did two other right-wing ruling coalition parties: the nationalistic Attack with 1.12% and Nations Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria with 1.2%.

One of the big surprises in the elections was the decisive win of Prime Minister Borissov's centre-right Citizens for European Development over the Bulgarian Socialist Party. The opposition Socialist Party, which quit Parliament in February, was neck and neck with the centre-right according to some opinion polls. Borissov's victory comes amid the "Apartment-gate" scandal, which revealed that top politicians and state officials bought luxury apartments at prices well below the market rate. The scandal resulted in several resignations, including that of Citizens for European Development's parliamentary leader Tsvetan Tsvetanov, who left the national assembly.

The current EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Mariya Gabriel, who led Citizens for European Development's electoral list, will most likely be the next Bulgarian Commissioner. Most of the current Bulgarian centre-right MEPs will also return in the next European Parliament. The current Party of European Socialists leader and MEP, Sergei Stanishev, will also keep his mandate after managing to overcome opposition from his fellow Bulgarian Socialist Party members who tried to remove him from the election list. A big question remains who will be the MEPs from Movement for Rights and Freedoms. Leader of the list and chairman of the party, Mustafa Karadayi, has already indicated that he will give up his seat in the EP. The party will also have to make a hard decision on whether the controversial MP and businessman Delyan Peevski (currently second on the list) will become an MEP.



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Croatia

On Sunday 26 May, Croatia held one of the most dramatic elections in its recent history. This weekend's elections marked the worst electoral result for the ruling Croatian Democratic Union party (EPP), which only managed to secure 4 seats (losing 2 seats from the 2014 European elections). The turnout for the elections was 29%, a significant increase compared to the previous elections (25%).

The centre-right Croatian Democratic Union, which is currently the largest actor in the governing coalition, received 22.71% of the votes. Opposition parties like the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (S&D) won 18.69%, while the right-wing coalition Croatian Sovereignists (ECR) received 8.49%. Mislav Kolakušić's Independent List received 7.87% of votes, Human Shield 5.66%, and the Amsterdam Coalition (ALDE) 5.23%. A number of other lists did not cross the 5% threshold. Looking at the mandates, the Croatian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party received 4 MEP seats, while Croatian Sovereignists, the Independent List of Mislav Kolakušić, Human Shield and the Amsterdam Coalition were each allocated one MEP.

While the Croatian Democratic Union performed well under the leadership of Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, who is very popular among the EPP, the party lost the support of more right-wing voters due to its shift to the centre. Some voters opted for more radical right-wing options like the Croatian Sovereignists, whose leader Ruža Tomašić managed to renew her European Parliamentary

mandate (she was formerly elected on a Croatian Democratic Union list) as she gained the largest number of preferential votes (68,955). The Independents for Croatia, another right-wing party, were very close to the election threshold but did not manage to secure enough votes.

Despite polls indicating that the Social Democratic Party was experiencing the lowest support in its history, the centre-left performed well in Croatia's four largest cities, sending a clear message to the ruling centre-right. This defeat is a clear indication that politics must take a different turn if the Croatian Democratic Party plans to keep its electorate and win at the national parliamentary elections in 2020. The biggest surprise of these elections is former judge and independent Mislav Kolakušić who got the second highest number of preferential votes (67,824).

According to the lists, the following Croatian MEPs will descend upon Brussels: Karlo Ressler, Dubravka Šuica, Tomislav Sokol, Željana Zovko (EPP), Biljana Borzan, Tonino Picula, Predrag Fred Matić, Romana Jerković (S&D), Ruža Tomašić (ECR) Mislav Kolakušić (Independent List), Ivan Vilibor Sinčić (former EFDD) and Valter Flego (ALDE). This list is subject to change.



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Cyprus

The European Parliament election did not result in any change in the allocation of Cypriot seats and followed the Europe-wide trend with regard to increased voter turnout with participation rising to 44.99%.

The Democratic Rally (EPP) retained its two seats with 29.02% of the vote, as did the Progressive Party of Working People (GUE/NGL) with 27.49%. On the other hand, the Democratic Party (S&D) and the Socialist Party (S&D) retained their separate seats, with 13.80% and 10.58% respectively.

The elections featured a record 72 candidates in total, with the far-right nationalist party, National Popular Front (NI), securing 8.25%.

Even if it remains the largest party in Cyprus, the Democratic Rally (EPP) lost 9% of the votes compared to 2014. That may be attributed to the closure of the Cooperative Cyprus Bank and the resignation of the Minister of Justice in May, following a public outcry for failure of the police to properly investigate certain disappearances of non-EU nationals.

Turkish Cypriots living in the area under Turkish control were included in the electoral roll and were entitled to vote, with some 6.93% doing so, compared to only 3.19% in the previous elections. This was possibly due to the participation of two Turkish Cypriot movements/parties on the ballot, Yiasemi and the Cyprus Socialist Party-KSP, and the participation of another Turkish Cypriot candidate with the Greek Cypriot left. Also, efforts were

made to increase Turkish Cypriot voters' participation.

The most notable outcome was the election of Niyazi Kizilyurek (GUE/NGL) who is the first Turkish-Cypriot to be elected to the European Parliament. On a negative note, no female candidate was elected to the EP. It is also notable that three out of five current MEPs that were candidates for re-election retained their seats, namely Lefteris Christoforou (EPP), Costas Mavrides (S&D) and Demetris Papadakis (S&D).

Regarding the next Cypriot Commissioner, it is likely that Stella Kyriakidou, Cypriot MP of the Democratic Rally (EPP) will succeed Christos Stylianides of the same party, who is the current Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.



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Czech Republic

The Czech Republic elects 21 MEPs to the European Parliament since it joined the European Union in 2004. This year, voter turnout for the elections was significantly higher than in 2014, although lower than in many other countries, as 28.72% of the Czech electorate showed up to the polls (compared to 18.20% in 2014). This time around, two new parties and 11 new MEPs are expected to represent Czechs in Brussels.

ANO2011 (ALDE) won the elections by securing 21.2% of the vote share and electing six MEPs. The centrist movement, led by wealthy populist entrepreneur and Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, secured a win despite the accusations of conflict of interest over EU funds which were paid to one of his private companies. Despite the allegations, the party will most likely continue to be part of the ALDE Group. Věra Jourová, the current European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality and prominent Member of the ANO party is expected to be considered once again as the Czech nominee for European Commissioner.

After a disastrous result at the 2014 European elections, the Civic Democratic Party (ECR) managed to increase its share to 14.5%, securing its position as the strongest opposition party and increasing its seats from two to four. The Czech Pirate Party, a central liberal and pro-EU party, are first timers of the European Parliament and obtained 14% of votes and three seats. The Czech Pirate Party will be choosing an EP group for the first time, and while both

the Greens/EFA and ALDE Groups would be in line with their ideology, the Czech Pirates refuse to be a member of the same party as ANO members.

The alliance of TOP09 and Mayors and Independents (both EPP) secured three seats. The far-right and most anti-EU group, also rejecting multiculturalism, the Freedom and Direct Democracy party (EAPN, formerly ENF) received 9% of votes and will have two seats in the European Parliament for the first time. The Christian and Democratic Union (EPP) lost one seat but managed to secure two mandates. The Communist Party of Czech and Moravia (GUE/NGL), received one seat.

With only 4% of votes the Social Democratic Party (S&D) lost their four seats and will have no representative for the first time, joining a line of other EU Member States who saw their social democratic parties wiped out.

The election results are unlikely to have a significant impact on the domestic political situation.



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Denmark

There are several surprises, many winners, at least two obvious losers and one very clear message resulting from the European elections held in Denmark on Sunday 26 May.

With a record turnout of 66%, votes were placed on many different parties as is customary in Denmark. Overall, the pro-European parties stood as winners while the eurosceptics were reduced to a mere 2 of 14 mandates, one on each side of the political spectrum.

The otherwise notoriously eurosceptic Danes have watched in disbelief as Great Britain – their long-established comrade in arms as the more reluctant Europeans within the EU – has sought to proceed with Brexit. By giving their support to the old pro-European parties, the Danish voters have shown that they do not see this as a time to rock the European boat further. It would be unwise to interpret the result as Danes suddenly turning European federalists, but it is clear that Dexit is not a likely option in Denmark.

The biggest winner and surprise is that Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's Liberal Party (ALDE) doubled its number of mandates from two to four. While all opinion polls ahead of the coming Danish general election on 5 June 2019 have indicated that the Liberal Party will have to step down from power, this result came as a complete surprise and may prove something of a game changer also in the national election campaign. The Social Liberal Party (ALDE) also doubled its mandates from one to two seats. The Social Liberal Party is the party of current European Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager.

The Danish Social Democrats (S&D) saw some progress, although not enough to gain more than their existing three mandates. With the surprise of the Liberal Party becoming the biggest, the Social Democrats found it visibly difficult to rejoice in the fact that the opposition parties as such now hold a majority of the Danish European mandates (8 of 14).

The Socialist People's Party (Greens/EFA) doubled their mandates from one to two and the Red-Green Alliance Party (GUE/NGL), which ran for the first time as an individual party at the European elections instead of being part of the People's Movement against the EU, gained one mandate.

A feature of the election night was whether the Conservative Party (EPP) would regain its lone mandate with a new and relatively unknown top-candidate. When the result was known, the Party was celebrating, and Denmark still holds a position in the EPP.

The second biggest surprise of the Danish European election is the almost meltdown of the eurosceptic, right-wing populist Danish People's Party (EAPN, formerly ENF) that were reduced from four to one mandate. The second loser was the cross-party People's Movement against the EU that for the first time since 1979 will not be represented in the European Parliament.

With a European Parliament where ALDE may turn out to be the kingmakers, many Danish observers are now turning their interest towards what this might imply for the possibilities of ALDE's candidate Margrethe Vestager becoming a serious contender for the European Commission presidency.



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Estonia

The Estonian elections were won by the opposition's centre-right Reform Party (ALDE) who campaigned as an alternative to the current coalition that brought the Estonian far-right party into government.

The Reform Party gained 26% of the votes which translates to two seats out of the six possible. The Reform Party, which has held the Prime Minister's position for most of the last two decades, continued to perform well in this election with slightly better results than five years ago.

The current PM's party, the Centre Party (ALDE), did significantly worse. The Centre gained 14%, giving them one seat in Europe. There are two major reasons for the dismal result: 1) the Centre Party formed a coalition with the far-right Estonian Conservative People's Party (Others) which has antagonised the local Russian-speaking population, the main pillar of Centre Party support, and 2) a relatively weak candidate list.

The Social Democrats (S&D) result is also noteworthy. Their monthly polling results gave them 10-13%, but for the elections they gained a whopping 23%. This was all down to one superstar candidate Marina Kaljurand, who received 20% of all votes and 84% of the votes given to the Social Democrats.

Kaljurand, currently an MP in the Estonian parliament, has been a diplomat for most of her career. After resigning from the diplomatic corps, she chaired the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace.

The second-best individual result was achieved by Andrus Ansip from the Reform Party, who is currently Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Single Market.

Pro Patria, the only Estonian party in the EPP, did not attain a seat in the European Parliament.

The key takeaway from the elections is the Centre Party's poor result. While not a surprise in itself – polls had shown a sharp drop in their support in recent months – the elections have made this downslide an official fact. The Centre Party must now think how to avoid further losses. If this is not achieved, the current coalition could collapse as the party cannot risk losing its control over the capital in the 2021 municipal elections.

The unofficial Estonian candidate for the new Commission is Kadri Simson, from the Centre Party and a member of the Estonian Parliament. Before becoming an MP, Simson was the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure. Simson is a key ally of the Prime Minister.



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Finland

Despite early predictions to the contrary, voting activity increased substantially, from 39% in 2014 to 42%, reversing the declining trend in voter activity.

Finland's Green Party (Greens/EFA) had its best ever European Parliament elections result, seeing its share of the vote jump from 6.7% to 16% and gaining two seats. The Greens also hold the so-called 'Brexit seat' – the 14th Finnish seat in the European Parliament, which Finland will get when the United Kingdom leaves the EU. The newly-elected MEP and former Green Party chairman Ville Niinistö is likely to take a prominent role within the Green movement, together with the incumbent MEP Heidi Hautala who has been re-elected for a new term.

The National Coalition Party (EPP) topped the poll with 20.8% voter support to maintain its three seats in the European Parliament, although voter enthusiasm in this election slipped by 1.8 percentage points. This was a routine performance for the National Coalition Party, which has always identified itself as part of the pro-European moderate right and enjoys the support of the educated classes. All three sitting MEPs retained their seats.

The Social Democrats (S&D) gained two seats with 14.6% of the vote. Before the elections, the party chairman and Prime Minister-elect Antti Rinne, indicated that the next Finnish Commissioner should be a woman. This means that Mia-Petra Kumpula Natri, who retained her seat as an MEP is the most likely candidate, with

the former Social Democrats Party Chair and Minister of Finance Jutta Urpilainen as a possible alternative. The former Finance Minister Eero Heinäluoma will likely also be an influential figure in the new European Parliament.

The Finns Party (currently ECR) performed worse than expected, retaining their two seats and 13.8% of the vote compared to 12.9% in 2014. Whether or not the Finns will join the EAPN (formerly ENF) remains an open question. The newcomer Laura Huhtasaari is expected to be a high-profile MEP.

The biggest loser of the elections was the Centre Party (ALDE). The 13.5% result represents a 6.1% drop from 2014 and gives them two seats. Newcomer Mauri Pekkarinen, who held ministerial positions in numerous governments, is expected to become a high-profile MEP.

The Left Alliance (GUE/NGL) dropped 2.4% from the last European elections but retained their single seat with 6.9% of the vote.

The final seat went to Nils Torvalds of the Swedish People's Party of Finland (ALDE), which managed to get 6.3% of the votes.



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For the European Parliament elections in France, the French people had to choose amongst no less than 34 electoral lists, of which less than 10 were established parties. In total, citizens elected 74 French MEPs. This year, the campaign was shadowed by the Yellow Vest movement and the national debate which followed. Once the height of the media coverage passed, however, the campaign morphed into a duel between the President's "Renaissance" list and the list of the populist party, National Rally (EAPN, formerly ENF). France had a record-breaking participation level of 50.73%, 8 points above the last European elections.

Both the populist National Rally (EAPN, formerly ENF) party and the governing La République en Marche party (ALDE) emerged as the leading forces in this election. With 23.43% of the vote, the National Rally is slightly above its level of participation in the last presidential elections while maintaining its record score of the 2014 European Parliament elections. La République En Marche – which ran in the election for the first time – clearly attracted a centre-right and pro-Europe electorate but with 22.31%, did not manage to become the primary French political force at European level. They will both send 23 MEPs to Brussels.

The results also confirmed the profound shift reverberating in French politics since the last presidential elections: the two historical mainstream parties, Les Républicains and the Socialist Party, have been overtaken, and with 8.48% (8 MEPs elected) and 6.18% (6 MEPs elected)

respectively, they will have scant influence, either at French or European level. With 13.5% and 13 elected MEPs, the green EELV became the third force on this ballot, attracting a centre-left electorate and youth votes.

President Macron had given artificial importance to the race for first place which played to his disadvantage, but overall the result is still a good one for him both at home and abroad, and his government's policy agenda should remain the same. A reshuffle is still possible to adjust the priorities of the second part of the presidential mandate.

Although National Rally is accustomed to being ahead in some electoral races, still, it does not presently represent an alternative for government as it has no flexibility to shape alliances with other parties.

The centre ALDE group should gain significant strength with the new MEPs from La République En Marche. The first victims of the French elections will be the EPP and S&D groups, to which Les Républicains and the Socialist Party used to provide strong delegations. The National Rally will as usual provide one of the strongest delegations to the Eurosceptic/far right group, and EELV will be the second delegation in the Greens/EFA.

Macron is now seeking a "friendly" nominee as President of the European Commission, as opposed to the one who would emerge from the *Spitzenkandidat* process.



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The parties of Angela Merkel's federal grand coalition, the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (EPP) and the Social Democrats (S&D), faced significant losses in Sunday's European election.

Nonetheless, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union became the strongest force and achieved 28.9% (29 seats) in the newly-elected European Parliament. The Greens (Greens/EFA) nearly doubled their results and achieved 20.5% and 21 seats, overtaking the Social Democrats (15.8%, 16 seats) for the first time in a national election. The right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (EAPN, formerly ENF) clearly improved its result of 2014 and achieved 11%, which equals 11 seats in the new EP. The Free Democratic Party (ALDE) gained 2% and will be represented by 5 MEPs (5.4%).

Two remarkable trends emerged: Firstly, a generation gap is identifiable. The governing parties are losing ground among younger generations in particular. In contrast, the Greens have generally become more popular among young voters and are the favoured party of first-time voters. Secondly, a regional divide has become clear, as the right-wing Alternative for Germany has particularly strong support in the former East Germany. They even turned out to be strongest party in the states of Brandenburg and Saxony.

The results of the EP elections were similar to state and local elections, which took place in several parts of Germany. In the state of Bremen, the Social Democrats lost its position as the biggest party in

the state parliament for the first time in 73 years, further proof of the party's decline. The results of both European and local elections may offer a preview of the upcoming state elections in Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia in autumn 2019.

The ongoing decline of the Social Democrats increases the pressure on their leader Andrea Nahles. The outcome of state elections might fuel discussions about an early break-up of the government coalition at the federal level. Further, a cabinet reshuffle is imminent, as the current Federal Minister for Justice, Katarina Barley, will move to Brussels. She was the lead candidate of the German Social Democrats in the European elections.

In the event that Manfred Weber (Christian Social Union), the current EPP nominee for Commission President, does not get appointed to the role, the chances are high that Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Peter Altmaier or Federal Minister of Defence Ursula von der Leyen (both Christian Democratic Union) will be selected as Germany's EU Commissioner. Both face increased pressure in German politics, are known to be close Merkel allies, and are experienced in European politics.

Among others, one potentially interesting incoming young MEP is Rasmus Andresen (Greens/EFA). He is from the same state and party as Jan Philipp Albrecht, who advocated for privacy policy issues in Brussels as MEP before becoming state minister in Schleswig-Holstein for Digitalisation.



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In Greece, New Democracy (EPP), the centre-right main opposition party, was the indisputable winner of the European Parliament elections, after having scored about 9.5% more than the governing Syriza (GUE/NGL) leftist party (33.27% vs. 23.76%).

In parallel, New Democracy also made significant gains in local (mayoral) and regional elections also held on Sunday. Voter turnout was at 57%, slightly lower than in 2014 (59.97%) but higher than in 2009 (52.61%).

The Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, called for an early national election following the defeat of his party. Tsipras said he would visit the Greek President to request the early dissolution of parliament after the second round of local and regional elections that will take place on 2 June.

In the run-up to the European Parliament elections, Tsipras had brought a series of measures to Parliament that some regarded as equivalent to handouts and defied the Conservatives to vote against them. They did not, but nonetheless accused Tsipras of making a gambit for votes which has raised the red flag for the country's creditors.

Sunday's results and the better than expected performance of New Democracy have fuelled optimism in the Greek Stock Exchange. Nevertheless, independent analysts highlight the heavy burden of responsibility that both Prime Minister Tsipras and opposition leader Mitsotakis

bear ahead of the national elections, as people's sacrifices of the past 10 years might be again at risk.

In third place in the European Parliament elections, the Socialists of the Movement for Change (S&D) followed with 7.55%, ahead of the Communist Party (NI) with 5.52% and the far-right Golden Dawn with 4.86% (NI). The newly formed hard-line nationalist party, Greek Solution, with 4.12% (Others) was boosted by some negative reactions to the agreement recently reached with Northern Macedonia. Democracy in Europe Movement 2025, the pan-European movement launched first by Syriza's Yanis Varoufakis back in 2015, gained 3.04% (Others) - marginally above the threshold of 3%.

If the results hold, New Democracy will win seven European Parliament seats, Syriza will get six, the Socialists, the Communists and Golden Dawn two each, and the Greek

Solution and Diem25 one each. In regards to the elected members of the European Parliament, the majority have served at least one previous term.



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This election was the fourth time that Hungarians elected representatives to the European Parliament, where Hungary has 21 seats. The last elections were held in 2014 with a turnout of approximately 29%; compared to then, this time the turnout was more than 43%, which is the highest in the history of European elections in Hungary.

Out of the 21 seats, Hungarians have trusted the governing Fidesz-KDNP (EPP) with 13 seats. As was expected, Fidesz-KDNP triumphed with a landslide victory, receiving 52.3% of the votes. With this result, the right-wing conservative party alliance has won the European Parliament elections in Hungary for the fourth consecutive time. Moreover, Fidesz won its tenth major election (general, European, regional, referendum) in a row since autumn of 2006. However, Fidesz only managed to get 41% of the votes in Budapest, the capital, which is a slight decrease compared to their results during the 2018 general elections.

The real surprise of the elections was the very poor performance of the Socialist Party (S&D) and of the former radical right-wing party Jobbik (NI). The Socialist Party reached just 6.66% of the vote (11% in 2014), while Jobbik received 6.41% (14% in 2014), both equalling just one seat. However, the Green party Politics Can Be Different performed even worse. In contrast to the 2014 elections, the party was not able this time to gather enough support to reach the parliamentary threshold; they received only 2.1%. The executive board of the party resigned right after the official publication of the results.

The winner of the contest for second place was the Democratic Coalition (S&D) gaining more than 16% of votes, gaining four seats (two seats more than in 2014). The party of Ferenc Gyurcsány, former socialist Prime Minister of Hungary, finally became the leading power of the opposition, hence significantly interfering with the domestic status quo.

Newcomer party Momentum Movement (ALDE) – founded just two years ago – received their first ever mandates in any elections: now they will be represented in the European Parliament, a little more than a year after failing to reach the threshold in the Hungarian parliamentary elections. The party received almost 10% of votes which is a real breakthrough for them and a very promising result before the upcoming local elections. Momentum Movement even managed to beat the Democratic Coalition and finish second in eight Budapest districts.

Two more parties have achieved a measurable result: the radical-right party Our Homeland founded last year reached 3.3%, while the joke Hungarian Two-tailed Dog Party, received 2.6% of the votes – but neither secured any seats.



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Audible gasps echoed across the country at 10pm on Friday evening as exit poll results were announced. In a completely unanticipated turn of events, the Green Party (Greens/EFA) not only topped the poll in Dublin (9% ahead of its closest rival) but it looked as though they might also get seats elsewhere. The picture looked somewhat different as the results came in, however, as the exit polls had in fact overestimated support for the Greens. Notwithstanding this, Ciaran Cuff, a former Green Minister in the 2007-2011 Fianna Fail (ALDE)-Green coalition which previously led Ireland into an IMF bailout programme, will still top the poll for the Greens in Dublin, albeit by a much smaller margin than suggested by the exit poll.

The Green wave thus finally hit Irish shores and looks to have left rival parties, including the governing Fine Gael (EPP) party, scrambling to address their track record on Green issues. The Greens will see that as a victory in and of itself. It will be interesting to see whether their support continues if a general election is called in the coming weeks – something which Taoiseach Leo Varadkar strongly hinted at on Sunday evening. Voters are notoriously fickle when it comes to European elections, with many seeing it as a protest, believing that the stakes are lower. General elections often yield a very different result, when voters take a closer look at actual political party policies. Regardless, this is a huge win for the Irish Greens who have not had a seat in the European Parliament since 2004.

There was an altogether different story for Sinn Féin (GUE/NGL), who stormed to success in 2014, electing three MEPs. The expected return of only two MEPs in this

election will be a huge disappointment to the party that has failed to live up to its promises and offer a viable alternative on the issues most galling to Irish people – housing and healthcare.

Green gains and Sinn Féin losses aside, in another surprising turn of events, centre parties managed to gain ground. The EPP-aligned centre-right Fine Gael party will maintain its four seats. Not surprisingly, European Parliament Vice-President Mairead McGuinness ran rings around rivals and topped the poll, getting easily elected on the first count and keeping her plan to become President of the European Parliament on track. The real surprise was the incredibly strong performance of her running mate Maria Walsh. The former Rose of Tralee (an Irish beauty pageant) and political newcomer proved to be extremely transfer-friendly which is expected to see her win the fourth seat. Deirdre Clune lost her seat in the South in what Fine Gael strategists will see as an election management failure. Former Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Frances Fitzgerald did less well than expected in Dublin, but still managed to take the second seat. Veteran MEP Seán Kelly was elected for the Fine Gael and EPP ticket on the first count in Ireland South.

The ALDE-aligned Fianna Fail, who have lacked a voice in the European Parliament over the past five years, successfully ran former Minister Barry Andrews in the capital, although he may have to wait to take up his seat in November when Britain leaves the EU. Billy Kelleher, a sitting Member of the national parliament for Cork North Central, will also take a seat in the European Parliament.



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In Italy, the 2019 European election was won by the League (EAPN, formerly ENF), which under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini has turned the movement into an anti-Euro party. Salvini's criticism of the single currency and of EU fiscal rules, as well as his decision as a Minister of the Interior to close Italian ports to illegal immigrants have paid off: the League took 34.3% of votes and 28 seats, an astonishing result compared to the 2018 general election (17.3%) and to the 2014 European election (6.2%, five seats).

The League will be the largest national delegation in the newly formed EAPN (formerly ENF) group and one of the largest in the European Parliament as a whole, while Salvini is emerging as the leading figure in the eurosceptic trans-national platform.

The electoral campaign has been polarised, with Salvini taking centre stage while a vocal anti-Salvini front emerged, enjoying the support of the media as well as of the Catholic hierarchies. The Five-Star Movement (former EFDD), the League's ally in government, was the victim of this polarisation: caught between Salvini and his opponents, Five-Star leader and Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio ran a campaign which was too moderate to energise his base. The Five-Star Movement received 17% of votes and 14 seats, down from 32.6% in 2018 and 21.1% (17 seats) in 2014, also due to a low voter turnout (56% vs. 73% in 2018 and 58% in 2014).

The Five-Star Movement is isolated at European level and it is not clear if they will apply for EFDD membership again.

Instead, polarisation and leadership change were beneficial to the Democratic Party (S&D), which rose from 18.7% in 2018 to 22.7% and 18 seats. This was a success, since the Democratic Party secured more votes than the Five-Star Movement, although this result does not compare with Party leader Renzi's triumph in 2014 (40.8% and 31 seats).

Two other centre-right parties won a number of seats: Berlusconi's centre-right Forza Italia (EPP) with 8.8% and seven seats, and nationalist Fratelli d'Italia (ECR) with 6.5% and five seats. Emma Bonino's pro-EU +Europa failed to win any seats.

Neither the League nor the Five-Star Movement have strong incentives to bring the ruling coalition down. Instead, the approval shown by voters of Salvini's hard stances on immigration and fiscal discipline will lead to a more assertive position of the Italian government, especially in view of the negotiations with the European Commission on the 2020 budget next autumn, when the League and the Five-Star Movement will attempt to cancel the 3% VAT increase which the government had committed to introducing, starting from next year.



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Approximately 34% of all voters went to the polls to elect the eight Latvian MEPs.

The New Unity party (EPP) came first with 26% of the vote and will elect two MEPs. In 2014, the party won four mandates, and its representative, Valdis Dombrovskis, then became European Commissioner. Over the last three years, however, the party almost collapsed and only through some luck entered the Latvian parliament in the autumn elections in 2018. The party can therefore be considered as one of the winners of this election. Its achievement is no surprise, however, because it has positioned itself as a pro-European liberal-centric party. Valdis Dombrovskis has been elected, and will most likely be put forward for another mandate as European Commissioner.

The Harmony party (S&D) came second, with 17% of the vote, thus obtaining two mandates, one of which will be given to the current Mayor of Riga. Harmony positions itself as a Russian-speaking social-democratic party and has had close links with the ruling party in Russia for many years. It has always been an opposition party in the Latvian parliament and could count on stable electoral support, so the result is not unexpected.

The third-best result goes to National Alliance (ECR), which – as expected – gained 16% of the vote. Its candidate, Robert Zile, has been re-elected to the European Parliament for the third time.

Fourth place goes to the newly created Development/For! party, which gained 12%. It considers itself to be a centre-liberal party and its MEP will be a university political science professor without prior political experience. He was attached to the party before the European elections.

In fifth place is the Russian Union of Latvia party (Greens/EFA), which gained 6%. The party was also represented in the previous parliamentary legislature and its representative, Tatiana Ždanoka, has extensive experience working in the European Parliament although always within the opposition group.

The only two losers in these elections are the anti-establishment KPV.LV party and The New Conservative Party, each of which won a 16% mandate in the autumn 2018 parliamentary elections in Latvia, but which failed to pass the 5% threshold.



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According to Eurostat polls, a record number of Lithuanians trust the EU. Nevertheless, public and media interest in European Parliament elections is low and the election campaigns were barely visible. While overshadowed by the simultaneously occurring second round of presidential elections, the EP election activity resulted in the highest turnout ever – 53.8%.

There were 16 political parties and public election committees (PEC) participating in the European elections. The PEC format was introduced this year as a new form of democratic political participation, but unlike the recent municipal elections in which PECs gained majority positions, only one succeeded in the European elections: Aušra Maldeikienė, a very outspoken Lithuanian economist, lecturer and journalist, and current member of the Lithuanian parliament.

Lithuanians rejected the current European trend of radicalisation and populism placing trust in the mostly traditional and pro-European parties.

The Homeland Union-Christian Democrats (EPP) increased their presence to three seats. The Conservatives actively mobilised their voter base to support their candidate for President – former Minister of Finance, Ingrida Šimonytė. Despite her loss to economist Gitanas Nausėda, the significant activity of the party helped elect three new MEPs – long-time members of the Lithuanian Parliament Andrius Kubilius (former Prime Minister, twice over) and Rasa Juknevičienė (former Defence Minister), as well as historian and political newcomer Professor Liudas Mažylis (EPP).

The Social Democratic Party (S&D) succeeded in maintaining two seats – Vilija Blinkevičiūtė was re-elected as MEP for

the third time, and is joined by long-time member of the Lithuanian parliament, Juozas Olekas (former Defence Minister) (S&D).

The Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union (Greens/EFA) retained their two mandates – Mr. Bronius Ropė was re-elected for the second time. The other seat was won by the popular retired Olympic Basketball star but political neophyte Mr. Šarūnas Marčiulionis, immediately resigning it in favor of the more experienced economist and member of Parliament, Mr. Stasys Jakeliūnas, who has made a name for himself pursuing and accusing the political/economic influence of large Scandinavian banks in Lithuania.

The remaining four seats are equally divided among: the Poles in Lithuania / Christian Family Union and the Russian Alliance (MEP Valdemar Tomaševski, re-elected for the third time) (ECR), the Lithuanian Liberal Movement (MEP Petras Auštrevičius, re-elected a second time) (ALDE), Labour Party (MEP Viktor Uspaskich, re-elected a second time) (ALDE), as well as the above-mentioned Maldeikienė (either ALDE or Greens/EFA).

In total, five current MEPs were re-elected, six are new. Distribution by EP Groups will be: EPP–3, ALDE–2, S&D–2, Greens/EFA–2, ECR–1, undecided–1.

Surprisingly, current MEPs Antanas Guoga (named one of 28 most active visionaries transforming European politics, Politico, 2015) and Rolandas Paksas (former Prime Minister and impeached President of Lithuania) lost their seats.



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European elections in Luxembourg saw the distribution of MEPs change with the Christian Social People's Party (EPP) losing a seat to the Democratic Party (ALDE) to have two seats each. The Socialist Workers' Party (S&D) and the Green Party (Greens/EFA) each retained one. While this is not significant in terms of the issue of the rise of European populism, it does signal change for Luxembourg.

The big loser is the Christian Social People's Party which slumped from 38% in 2014 to 21% in 2019 with the lead party in the ruling coalition, the Democratic Party, coming out as the big winners with 21% of the votes (+7%). In terms of outcome, the Christian Social People's Party was expected to be challenged as in the halo effect of Jean-Claude Juncker as the "Luxembourg National Candidate for President" was absent as was the popular candidate and former Commissioner, Viviane Reding. Christian Social People's Party candidates were relative unknowns. By contrast, the Democratic Party put up strong candidates with high profiles and reaped the benefits. Their success is also believed to reflect the support being expressed for the lead party in the governing coalition. However, it is also seen by some as a change towards a more liberal electorate, with younger people from more diverse backgrounds now voting.

The Socialist Workers' Party, second coalition partner (along with the Democratic Party and the Greens) is at 12% (+0.4%). However, their elected MEP and

Luxembourg's European Commissioner candidate designate, Nicolas Schmit, only polled tenth place in terms of personal vote. Should he be chosen as Commissioner, his seat will be taken by Marc Angel.

The Green Party are up 4% to 19%, taking one seat. The Pirate Party got 7.5% in its second European election outing and the right-wing conservative ADR (ECR) was up 2.5% to 10%. Neither secured a seat, suggesting there remains little evidence of a swing to the extreme right or left.

Overall, it seems to be that the campaigning tactics of the Democratic Party paid off and the Christian Social People's Party lost out because of poor commitment on their part. Interestingly, this is a complete reversal of the 2014 situation when the Christian Social People's Party saw major gains. The role of the changing profile of the Luxembourg electorate is yet to be fully determined.



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The official results of the European Parliament elections show the Labour Party (S&D) with a substantial lead over the Nationalist Party (EPP). Labour, with 53% of the vote, had four candidates elected, compared to the National Party's 40% and two seats.

As expected, incumbent Labour MEP Miriam Dalli had the strongest showing and was elected at the first count with 63,438 votes, a significant improvement from her performance in her maiden European Parliament election in 2014, when she was the third MEP elected. She was followed by former Labour leader and prime minister Alfred Sant, elected on the 14th count after getting 26,592 votes on the first count.

Two newcomers, both Labour, are among the six candidates elected to serve as Maltese MEPs. They are lawyer Alex Agius Saliba and Gozo local councillor Josianne Cutajar. Alex Agius Saliba, who was on top of the Labour list, got 18,808 first count votes and Josianne Cutajar got 15,603. They were elected on the 39th count.

Incumbents Roberta Metsola and David Casa, the longest serving MEP, were elected for the Nationalist Party. Metsola was also elected on the first count, with 38,206 votes. David Casa got 20,493 first count votes and was elected on the 38th count.

In terms of first count votes for the Nationalist Party, the best performing

candidates who were unelected were Frank Psaila, who got 13,268 votes, and Peter Agius, who obtained 10,474. On the Labour side, Cyrus Engerer obtained 5,394 votes.

In the Democratic Party (ALDE), candidate Appelgren Camilla got 3,053, much more than party leader Godfrey Farrugia, who got just 1,668 first count votes.

The Nationalist Party's incumbent MEP Francis Zammit Dimech lost on the night, and failed to get re-elected. The former minister had been elected to the EU two years ago in an election to replace Therese Comodini Cachia, when she reluctantly gave up her seat to serve in the Maltese parliament.



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The Netherlands elected 26 Members of the European Parliament (with this due to rise to 29 if and when the UK leaves the EU). Around 41% of eligible voters found their way to the polls, which is more than the last EU elections in 2014 (37.3%), but much less than the provincial elections in 2019 (55%).

Following the recent provincial elections, this election was characterized by two things: Firstly, the clash of two parties more on the right side of the political spectrum – the Eurosceptic newcomer Forum for Democracy (the big winner of last years' provincial elections) and Prime Minister Mark Rutte's party, the liberal-conservative People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (ALDE). Secondly, the uniformity of the left – with two *Spitzenkandidaten* (European Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans for S&D, and Bas Eickhout for the Greens/EFA).

Before election day all eyes were on the long-awaited confrontation between Rutte and Forum for Democracy's Thierry Baudet. Their one-on-one debate on the evening before election day was highly anticipated. However, this didn't help either party to win, as the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy now has four seats (15%) and Forum for Democracy four (11%) – which is less than Labour's five seats (18,1%). Geert Wilders' right-wing Party for Freedom (ECR) was the biggest loser, dropping from four seats to one (4.1%).

On the left, it was a lot harder for voters to distinguish the parties. An online questionnaire that served as a decision aid for voter revealed that two of the main left-wing parties – Timmermans' Labour Party (S&D) and Eickhout's Greens entered identical answers to all 60 questions. This confirmed the lack of diversity among left-wing parties.

When voters are confused, they often look for a face they recognize, and Frans Timmermans is arguably the most recognizable European face for the Dutch. Coming from three seats, the exit polls put his Labour at a surprising five. This means their current MEPs (Paul Tang, Kati Piri, and Agnes Jongerius) retain their seats while two more (including newcomer Vera Tax) will join them.

It is far too early to say what this means for Timmermans' candidacy for the European Commission Presidency. He pulled in votes, but not many expect this to result in him securing the Commission's top job. Notably, Bas Eickhout's GroenLinks gained a seat, putting them at 3 (10.5%). Eickhout is the Greens' *Spitzenkandidaten* along with Ska Keller. Democrats 66 (ALDE) lost two seats and are now down at 2 (6.3%).



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With almost all official results in for the European elections in Poland, the ruling Law and Justice (ECR) party has scored a strong victory (with 45.5% of the vote) over the opposition European Coalition (38%). The only other party to pass the electoral 5% threshold was the left-liberal Spring party with 6% (Others).

The election showed that voter dynamics in Poland are fundamentally driven by Law and Justice's ability to deliver three elements of security: economic, state, and cultural. The party began the campaign by announcing a swathe of welfare benefits for key segments of the electorate, especially pensioners and families. During the campaign, it maintained a consistent drumbeat on external and internal security issues, especially flagging up successes in its bilateral security relationship with the US. Finally, it highlighted its opposition to migration and support for traditional Catholic family values, in line with the sentiments of many provincial and rural voters.

The pro-EU European Coalition (EPP) ran a campaign based on depicting the government as favouring "Polexit". Additionally, pro-opposition media launched well-timed exposés of alleged financial scandals involving Law and Justice leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski and PM Mateusz Morawiecki, including an exposé of child abuse scandals in the Catholic Church. None of these themes resonated with the bulk of the electorate, with voters focused on practical security issues rather than abstract European and progressive values.

The results establish Law and Justice as a key player for future alignments in the European Parliament. Its projected 26 seats

allow it significant leverage in whatever group it joins – either a revamped ECR or any new potential group. More indirectly, the scale of its victory may cause a rethink among those in the EU seeking to punish Poland for its stance on the rule of law, as the applied therapy thus far seems to have generated only greater support for Poland's ruling party.

Internally, this result may well lead to a collapse of the Coalition, with a possible departure of key members such as the Polish Peasant Party. It may well also call into question the leadership of Grzegorz Schetyna of the Civic Platform (EPP). The performance of the Coalition may also discourage the current President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, from re-entering Polish politics in the autumn, and even blunt his enthusiasm for standing in the 2020 Presidential elections. Finally, the failure of both the Kukiz party and the Confederation to pass the electoral threshold means that Law and Justice has effectively seen off any possible challenges coming from the right of the political spectrum.

These elections have generated one clear and hegemonic winner: Law and Justice and its leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski. Far from crumbling, support for Poland's "populists" is growing, and as the European project comes under increased challenge elsewhere in Europe, this upward trend will likely continue in the autumn parliamentary elections.



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The winner of Portugal's European elections was indifference and abstention, which moved from 27.58% in 1987 to 66.16% in 2014 and has now reached 68.6%.

Portugal has 21 seats in the European Parliament. Both the Socialist Party (S&D) with 33.98% (up from eight to nine seats) and the Left Bloc (GUE/NGL) with 9.82% (confirmed two seats) scored victories. Furthermore, the People-Animal-Nature Party (Greens/EFA) reached a surprising 5.08%, gaining one seat, reflecting the growing concerns of the electorate with climate change and other eco-related issues.

All other remaining parties lost support. The Social Democrats (EPP), the second largest political group, achieved 1.94%, retaining six seats. The Unitary Democratic Coalition (GUE/NGL) at 6.88% might just manage to keep two seats. The People's Party (EPP) with 6.19% will keep one seat. Support for small populist parties was weak, implying that the Portuguese remain clearly in favour of the European Union.

The outcome of the European elections has implications for the stability of the current government – known in Portuguese as “Geringonça” which loosely translates as “contraption”. In place since late 2015, this politically innovative solution means that Portugal has been governed by a Socialist government with the parliamentary support of the Communists and the Left

Bloc. The European elections have now put this arrangement in jeopardy. While the Socialists and Left Bloc gained two seats (one each), the Communist Unitary Democratic Coalition, the third member of the parliamentary coalition, lost almost 50% of the voters it had attracted in 2014. This downward trend will likely cause agitation with the disciplined Communist troops, meaning the “Geringonça” is unlikely to continue beyond the national elections in October 2019. The Socialists may now need to seek new alliances to govern the country.

The Left Bloc, now the third largest political group, could play a bigger role as a partner, although the Socialists prefer to govern with the Communists who are considered far more disciplined and control the Unions, thus avoiding strikes and social unrest.

In a nutshell, the Portuguese remain pro-EU and the traditional political system has demonstrated its strength. Portugal's national government will most likely remain in the hands of the left in the next four years, with the Social Democrats appearing to be in a weak position for the October elections, and the Socialists most likely to remain in power with a minority government free to choose ad hoc parliamentary alliances – a privileged position.



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Romania

President Klaus Iohannis congratulated his fellow Romanians for participating in large numbers in elections for the European Parliament and a simultaneous referendum, with a 50.2% participation rate.

Not everybody was in a celebratory mood. The European elections were coupled with a referendum on justice issues, and Romanians dealt a double blow to the ruling Social Democrats (S&D) who were seen as rejecting measures to tackle rampant state corruption. Exit polls showed both the opposition centrist National Liberal Party (EPP) and the ruling Social Democrats (S&D) on 23-24% , with the latter falling sharply below the 45% it won in the last national ballot in 2016.

While the Social Democratic Party lost votes, the National Liberal Party gained support and finished in first place, with over 27%, and probably 11 or 12 MEPs. The new anti-corruption platform Alliance 2020 (ALDE), bringing together the socially liberal Freedom, Unity and Solidarity Party and the liberal USR party, won over 22% and about eight or nine seats. The Alliance is led by former Prime Minister and EU Commissioner Dacian Cioloş. PRO Romania (ALDE), the party of former Prime Minister Victor Ponta came fourth, with an estimated score of 6.61%.

The centre-right Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania and the People's Movement Party (EPP) snatched one MEP seat each, barely passing the 5% electoral

threshold. Thus, the former Romanian president Traian Basescu will enter the new European Parliament on a conservative, powerful anti-migration agenda.

Regarding the appointment of the next Commissioner, Rovana Plumb from the Social Democrats Party seemed to be the favourite, but in the light of the results, the National Liberal Party could well come up with a proposal as well.

The outcomes of the European Parliament elections in Romania will mean a considerable boost to the new European group that French President Emmanuel Macron and ALDE will form, currently called "ALDE/Renaissance", which favours greater European integration.

At national level, drastic changes are not foreseen for the moment, although calls on the government to resign were made by some. Nonetheless, the first step towards another re-ordering of Romania's political scene appears to have been made ahead of the presidential election in December 2019. The incumbent President Iohannis is seen as having a strong chance of winning a second mandate.



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Slovakia

The results of the European Parliament elections in Slovakia showed the highest ever turnout in the election, although at 22.74% this still remains the lowest across the EU as a whole. The pro-EU parties received an absolute majority among those elected.

Slovakia will have 14 seats in the Parliament. The coalition of Progressive Slovakia (ALDE) and Spolu (S&D) – which successfully supported Zuzana Čaputová in the presidential election in March – won the elections with four seats (20.11%) ahead of the ruling Direction – Social Democracy (S&D) with three seats (15.72%). The far-right People's Party – Our Slovakia (NI) finished third with two seats (12.07%). The Christian Democrats (EPP), with 9.69% of the vote, will have two seats after the UK leaves the EU, while Freedom and Solidarity (ECR) also took two seats (9.62%). The last party elected to the European Parliament is Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (ECR) with one seat (5.25%).

Out of 14 MEPs only two, Monika Benova (S&D) and Ivan Stefanec (EPP), were MEPs in the outgoing parliament. The average age of MEPs has decreased and the voters gave preference to candidates who advocated for more consumer protection and, for the first time, also to environmental activists.

Most of the new MEPs have expressed preferences to work on foreign policy, human rights and social issues. However,

as many of them have just entered politics or have limited experience even at national level, running “more Europe” or “anti-Europe” campaigns, it remains to be seen how this will translate into their voting. Generally, only a quarter of newly-elected MEPs can be considered as more pro-business and in favour of fewer regulations.

The Government coalition lost the elections in Slovakia. The strongest ruling party Direction – Social Democracy has failed to come first in a nationwide election for the first time since it took power in 2006. Furthermore, the Hungarian minority within the country will not be represented at EU level for the first time in history, nor will the populist parties in Slovakia.



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On 26 May, Slovenian voters elected their eight candidates to the European Parliament. Among these, four were already MEPs in the previous legislature, one returns after a break, and three MEPs will be new to the European political arena. Slovenia has traditionally low voter turnout in EU elections. However, this time, 28.29% of voters came to the polls, the highest since 1994.

The joint list of the Democrats and People's party (EPP), which received 26.49% of the votes and three seats in the European Parliament, is considered the winner of the European elections in Slovenia. However, the overall balance of power has shifted to the left.

The centre-left Social Democrats (S&D) came in second, more than doubling its results from 2014 with 18.57%. Meanwhile, the list led by the country's Prime Minister Šarec (ALDE), came in third with 15.62%. Both parties will therefore receive two seats, while the New Slovenia (EPP) will have one seat.

The leader of the Democrats and People's Party coalition list Milan Zver is a qualified European politician returning to the EP for a third time, as well as MEP Romana Tomc and MEP Franc Bogovič who retained their seats. Tanja Fajon from the Social Democrats was also re-elected. Rather surprisingly, Milan Brglez, former speaker of the parliament, was elected on the Social Democrats' list thanks to preferential votes.

Another newcomer elected from Marjan Šarec's list is the journalist Irena Joveva, the youngest Slovenian MEP now seeking to be the voice of the youth. Her party colleague, Klemen Grošelj, is an expert on national security. The New Slovenia Party put an experienced politician, Ljudmila Novak, at the top of its list. She will be returning to the EP after a ten-year break.

The Left (S&D) and the Pensioners Party (ALDE) have narrowly missed the threshold even though both were expected to be much closer to winning a seat. Neither the National Party (NI) nor Alenka Bratušek's list (ALDE) can be satisfied with their 4% result. The Modern Centre Party (ALDE, 1.58%) experienced the biggest losses, being overtaken by two green parties and the far-right Homeland League.

As soon as the election results were published, a duel between the Social Democrats and the list of Marjan Šarec for the position of the European Commissioner started. The pressure within the government coalition to secure this prominent post is expected to intensify during the upcoming weeks. Reportedly, Social Democrats wants it for Tanja Fajon. Although both parties have the same number of MEPs, the Social Democrats will certainly try to influence relations within the coalition due to its 3% lead.



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Spain

The Socialist Party (S&D), led by Josep Borrell, performed well in the European elections in Spain and won 32.82% of the votes and 20 seats in the European Parliament, followed by the People's Party (EPP) with 20.11% of the votes and 12 seats, Ciudadanos (ALDE) with 12.2% and 7 seats, and the far-left Podemos (GUE/NGL) with 10.06% and 6 seats.

The far-right Vox (EAPN; formerly ENF) will have representation in the European Parliament for the first time with three seats and 6.21% of the votes. The exiled Catalan pro-independence conservative leader of Together for Catalonia (Others), Carles Puigdemont, obtained 4.64% of the votes and two seats, one behind the party led by the imprisoned leader of the far-left Catalan pro-independence party (GUE/NGL), Oriol Junqueras, who won 5.68% of the votes and three seats.

The results confirm the leadership of Pedro Sanchez as the newly elected Prime Minister, and the recovery of the Socialist Party in Spain, after seven years in opposition. The conservatives were able to regain some ground, consolidate the party's position as the second most supported party and maintain control over the centre-right. The People's Party held off the challenge of the liberal Citizens Party, which was vying for the same political ground but only managed to come in third. The results, on the other hand, confirm the decline of the far-left Podemos party (GUE/NGL), which was only able to increase its representation by one seat.

Participation in these European elections was significantly higher than the elections five years ago, reaching 64.4%, almost 20% higher than in 2015. The fact that they coincided with the regional and municipal elections probably had a strong influence on this strong participation.

These results position the Spanish socialists as the biggest national group among the European socialists. This is particularly relevant at a time of socialist weakness in the large EU countries, coupled with greater political and economic stability in Spain when compared to other large countries in the European Union.

The recently-elected socialist Prime Minister of Spain, Pedro Sanchez, is expected to use this position to push for greater influence and power in the European institutions. This could translate into a top position for Josep Borrell, as High Representative for Foreign Affairs in the European Commission, and Nadia Calviño, the current Finance Minister, as Competition Commissioner. Sanchez is also expected to vie for the chairmanship of key committees in the European Parliament.



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The European Parliament elections in Sweden provided four clear winners and three losers, with a record-breaking voter turnout of 53.3%.

The right-wing, eurosceptic and populist Sweden Democrats (ECR), won 15.4% of the popular vote and gained one seat, giving them three of the 20 Swedish Members of the European Parliament. The Moderate Party and the Christian Democrats (both EPP), also succeed in gaining one seat each by receiving 16.8% and 8.7% of the vote, respectively. The Moderate Party will send four parliamentarians to Brussels while the Christian Democrats will send two.

Despite topping the poll, the election result could be viewed as a disappointment for the Social Democrats (S&D), the party of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. It received its lowest percentage ever in a Swedish national election with 23.6% of the vote. However, the Social Democrats will return to Brussels maintaining their five MEPs. The Green Party (Greens/EFA), the smaller governing coalition party, also faced a rather gloomy performance and only won two seats by recording 11.4%, losing 3.8% of the vote compared to 2014. The Green Party did outstandingly well in the 2014 EP election, so a lesser result was expected. The Greens will be awarded Sweden's 21st seat when the UK leaves the EU.

The other two collaborative parties of the Swedish government, the Liberal Party and the Centre Party (both ALDE), saw mixed election results. The Liberal Party lost one

seat but managed to save the other, despite speculation to the contrary. It received 4.1% of the vote, continuing its downward trend. The Centre Party increased its seats to two by winning 10.8% of the popular vote.

The left-oriented, feminist party, Feminist Initiative, had a catastrophic election and received 0.8% of the vote compared to 5.3% in 2014 and will lose their seat in the European Parliament. The Left Party (GUE-NGL), won 6.7% of the vote and will return with a single seat.

The Swedish result of the European elections will boost the self-confidence of the opposition but is not expected to have any larger effect on the political landscape. Sweden's next Commissioner will likely be chosen from the ranks of the Social Democrats.



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The European election results have sent shockwaves through the British political system. Nigel Farage's Brexit Party (former EFDD), which was launched just six weeks ago, emerged as the biggest party with 31% share of the vote on a platform of leaving the European Union without a deal.

The results underlined the ongoing divisions of the country caused by the 2016 referendum. Remain parties arguing for a second referendum including the Liberal Democrats (ALDE), the Greens (Greens/EFA) and the Scottish and Welsh nationalists (Greens/EFA) also had a very good night. The Liberal Democrats came second with 15 MEPs and just over 20% of the vote. In Scotland, the Scottish National Party won an easy first place with over 40% of the vote.

The main opposition Labour Party (S&D), which in normal times would have benefited from government disarray, had its worst results since the 1920s winning just 14% of the votes and losing eight MEPs.

But it was the Conservatives (ECR) who had the most disastrous results, winning just three seats and a 9% share of the vote.

The biggest immediate impact will be on the Conservatives who are about to start their leadership campaign to replace Theresa May. Terrified of haemorrhaging votes to the Brexit party, Conservative MPs and members are likely to look favourably on those candidates favouring no deal

and leaving the EU at the end of October. The favourite to win the Conservative leadership election, Boris Johnson, warned that the Conservatives are on a final warning for the voters. In his own constituency in West London, the party came fourth. He said that the only way to avoid the annihilation was "to come out of the EU and that means doing it properly."

But adopting such an intransigent position looks unlikely to succeed in the House of Commons. Senior ministers are not ruling out voting with the opposition parties to bring down the government if it tried to leave the EU without a deal.

After its own disastrous performance, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is under enormous pressure to change his own party's Brexit position. MPs and Labour party members overwhelmingly favour a second referendum and, faced with a deepening and bitter split in the party, it seems likely that Corbyn will now reluctantly adopt this position.

Britain today looks increasingly ungovernable. Both Conservatives and Labour are deeply split and there is no majority in the House of Commons for any deal to leave or to hold a second referendum. A general election may not resolve the problem. Unless the EU kicks Britain out at the end of October, which seems unlikely, Britain could retain its current not-quite-out status for some time to come – leaving in principle but not in practice.





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