



2019 EU Elections

A Grayling briefing

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The logo for 'The EU Lobby' by Grayling. It features the text 'The EU Lobby' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The word 'EU' is highlighted with a stylized, multi-colored geometric graphic consisting of overlapping triangles in shades of purple, blue, and pink. Below 'The EU Lobby', the word 'GRAYLING' is written in a smaller, white, all-caps, sans-serif font. The background of the logo area is a photograph of a modern building with a glass and metal facade, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple and blue gradient.

The EU Lobby
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What's happening?

The elections to the European Parliament will take place from 23-26 May 2019, during which EU citizens directly elect Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to represent them for a 5-year mandate.

Any shift in the balance of power between the European Parliament's political groups will strongly influence the political character of the 2019-2024 session, with the result of the elections reflected in the allocation of committee responsibilities and legislative files.

With the European Parliament widely considered to have matured as a decision-making body during the 2014-2019 session, who gets what in this division of the spoils will have a lasting impact on the tone of debate for the next five years.

What about Brexit?

The 2019 elections will be the first to take place against the backdrop of the UK's departure from the EU. With the UK participating in the elections due to the unanticipated extension of negotiations, the European Parliament will revert to a seat distribution which will see the number of MEPs fall from 751 to 705. Under the reallocation some Member States will gain additional representation, including Spain, which will impact the balance of national interests in the European Parliament.

The next European Commission

The start of a European Parliament mandate also coincides with the start of a new 5-year mandate for the European Commission. One of the first MEP tasks is to approve the nominations made by Member States for future European Commissioners, as well as the President of the European Commission.

Most major political groups have nominated one (or more) so-called Spitzenkandidats – the thinking being that the Spitzenkandidat from the largest political group after the elections becomes Commission President.

With the EPP being the largest party in the 2014-2019 mandate, the President of the European Commission was EPP Spitzenkandidat Jean-Claude Juncker, the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg.

However, Member States have recently suggested that they would like to have a greater role in approving the President of the European Commission, as was the case before 2014 when EU leaders could select who they wanted as Commission President, with the European Parliament acting as a rubberstamp.

The debate on who should be the next European Commission President – and the process by which he or she is appointed - still continues today, mostly between the European Parliament, which wants the Spitzenkandidat system to be maintained, and the Council, which wants more control over the process. Such a scenario means that the next Commission President may not be any of the Spitzenkandidats...

European Elections 2019: Trends & Polling

The headline trend for the 2019 European election is that the unprecedented number of nationalists/populists elected in 2014 from across the EU is likely to be bettered again, with such parties polling strongly in national elections at the expense mainly of the establishment centre-right and centre-left political groups, the European Peoples' Party and the Socialists & Democrats. For the first time, the EPP and the S&D look likely to fall short of a governing majority, and as such the coming session is expected to be the most fractious ever.

The **EPP Group** will be weakened but should remain the biggest political force with more than 170 MEPs.

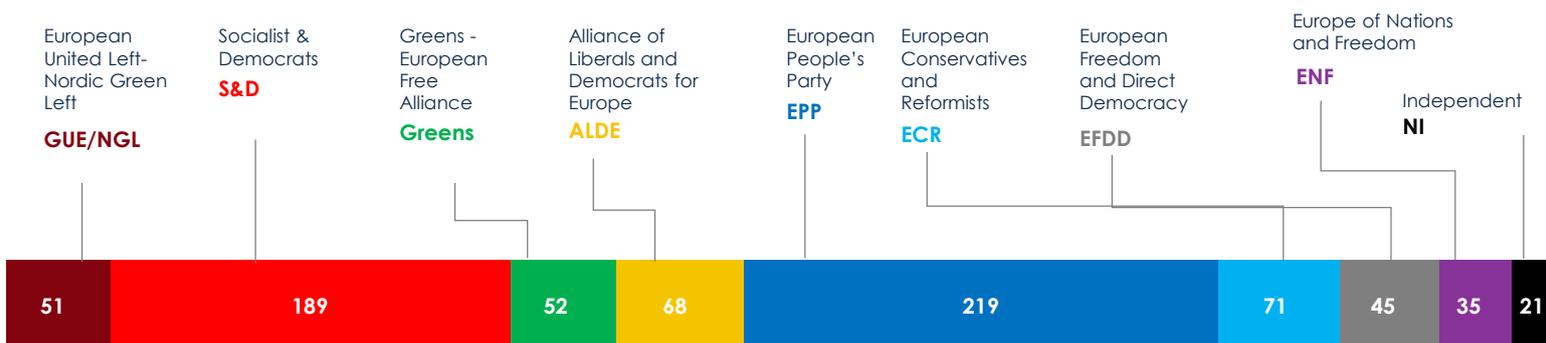
ALDE or a new iteration could gain around 100 MEPs, bolstered by an alliance with French President Emmanuel Macron's *La République en Marche* movement.

The **Socialists** are expected to be the big losers, partly due to the Brexit fallout and the eventual loss of UK MEPs, but because of a general decline in the fortunes of social democrats in recent national elections.

The eurosceptic **ECR** and **EFDD** parties will need to find new allies, paving the way for a possible consolidation of the anti-immigrant far-right groups (**ENF/ EFDD**).

A large group of **new as yet Unaffiliated Parties** are also expected to be returned in this election.

2014/2019 seat distribution:



2019/2024 seat distribution including the UK (751):



2019/2024 seat distribution excluding the UK (705):



* SOURCE: PollofPolls.eu (8 May 2019)



Key Issues

Many of the key issues in the 2019 EU elections cut across the political groups and have their roots in the wider challenges facing the EU. Continuing to tackle the lasting economic impacts of the Eurozone crisis also features as a priority for all political groups. With evidence mounting on humanity's impact on the climate, all political groups are also eager to highlight their green credentials.

While the approaches to these issues differ, the divisive issues are likely to be around security issues, whether related to asylum and migration, as the EU continues to grapple with the legacy of the 2015 migration crisis, or in relation to projecting European influence through deeper defence coordination. Relative commitment to free trade and the rule of law are also likely to prove controversial.



- Asylum and Migration
- Stronger defence
- Environment and sustainability
- Regional and youth equality
- Embrace innovative technologies
- Democracy and European values



- Equality and solidarity
- Youth and future
- Democracy and human rights
- Environment and sustainability
- Gender equality
- Asylum and migration



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- Free trade
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- Asylum and migration
- Less regulation
- Internal security
- Environment and sustainability
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- Asylum and migration
- Gender equality and youth
- Enforceable social rights
- Environment and sustainability
- Tackle corruption
- Democracy and rule of law