



The European Elections from the Inside

Election coverage issued by the European Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung on the 2024 European elections

The election report "European Elections from the Inside" presents the results of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament from a European and national perspective. Together with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung offices across Europe, a concise overview was compiled for each of the 27 member states of the European Union (EU), which analyses the results in the respective countries against the backdrop of current developments. The series of reports is intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of the overall outcome of the 2024 European elections.



The Political Groups of the 2019-2024 Legislative Period in the European Parliament

> **European People's Party (EPP)**

Founded in 1976. Largest parliamentary group during the 2019-24 legislative period, uniting Christian Democrats, conservatives and centrist political forces. Stands for a united Europe and peace, security and economic prosperity.

Exemplary members: CDU und CSU, CDA (Netherlands), Kristdemokraterna (Sweden), Platforma Obywatelska (Poland)

> **Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)**

Exists under its current name since 2009. Centre-left alliance stands for an inclusive European society based on the principles of freedom, equality and solidarity.

Exemplary members: SPD, Parti Socialiste (Belgium), Partidul Social Democrat (Romania), Partito Democratico (Italy)

> **Renew Europe (RE)**

Exists since 2004, since 2019 under its current name. Stands for a liberal society, politics and economy.

Exemplary members: FDP, Venstre (Denmark), Renaissance (France)

> **The Greens / European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)**

First elected to parliament in 1984. Committed to a strong Europe in the areas of environmental protection, peace, social justice and fair globalisation.

Exemplary members: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Déi Gréng (Luxembourg), Ecolo (Belgium)

> **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)**

Founded in 2009. Critical towards further EU-integration. Focus should be on the cooperation between member states and the EU becoming more functional.

Exemplary members: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Poland), Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden), Fratelli d'Italia (Italy)

> **Identity and Democracy (ID)**

Founded in 2019 as the successor to ENF-faction. Members are characterized as right-wing populists and right-wing extremists. Stands against European integration and focuses on national competences and identities.

Exemplary members: Rassemblement National (France), Partij voor de Vrijheid (Netherlands), FPÖ (Austria), Lega (Italy)

> **The Left (GUE/NGL)**

Established in 1994, located on the left of the political spectrum, partly EU-sceptical. Demand: A new start for Europe based on solidarity, equality and freedom.

Exemplary members: Die Linke, Syriza (Greece), Sinn Féin (Ireland), Podemos (Spain), La France Insoumise (France)

> **Independent members of parliament and individual party representatives**



Europe has voted

From 06 to 09 June 2024, around 360 million eligible voters were called upon to cast their vote in the largest transnational election in the world and elect the 720 members of the 10th European Parliament. For the first time, 16-year-olds were allowed to vote in Germany, Belgium, Malta and Austria and 17-year-olds in Greece.

Voter turnout in the pan-European context increased slightly to 51 per cent compared to 50.07 per cent in the last European elections in 2019.

The European elections were declared as the most important elections against the backdrop of the rise of right-wing populist trends in Europe. There were voices that spoke of an "existential struggle", e. g. a choice between democracy and freedom or those political forces that understand that we need a more integrated European Union to defend the interests of Europeans on the one hand and those driven by ideology on the other, who want less Europe or even reject it in principle.

The clear winner of the election is the European People's Party (EPP) with lead candidate Ursula von der Leyen well ahead of the S&D group (Social Democrats and Socialists). The liberal Renew group lost heavily but remained the third largest group, while the Greens suffered heavy losses, and the right-wing and far-right groups emerged stronger from the election; the Greens, previously the fourth-strongest force to date, falling behind the right-wing conservative ECR (European Conservatives and Reformists) and the radical right-wing Identity & Democracy (ID) group.

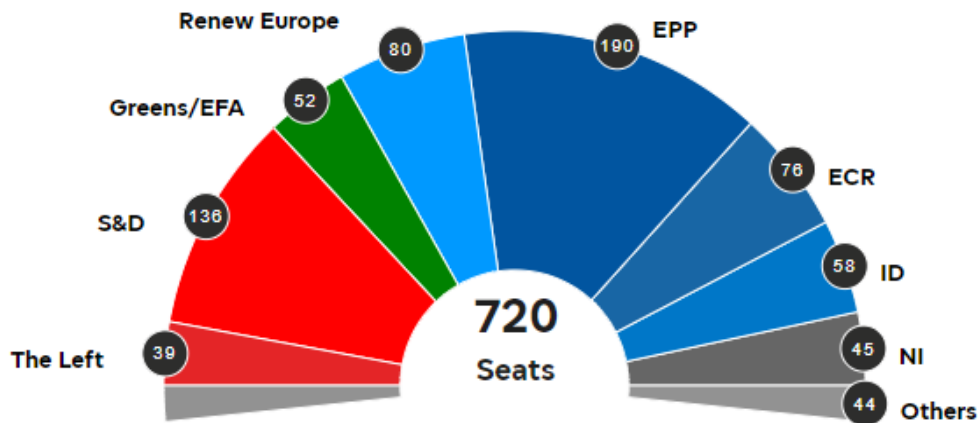
The predicted dramatic shift to the right has failed to materialise, but there has been a shift to the right in large parts of Europe. However, the political centre will have the key task of organising majorities with which the major political priorities of the EU can be implemented.

On the next page, we first look at the pan-European election results and the likely distribution of seats in the new legislative period. It should be emphasised that this is a snapshot and may change as the parliament and the political groups are constituted.

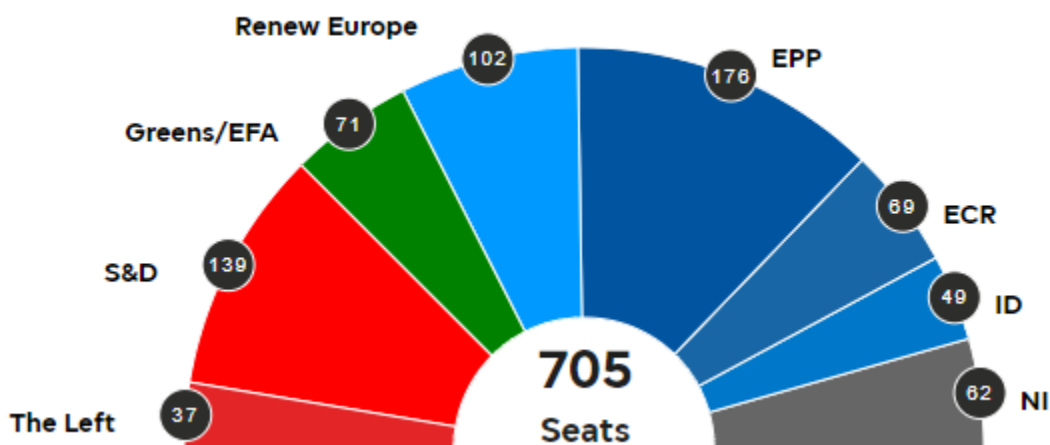
The election results from 27 member states are then presented below. This is also a snapshot of how the parties and political groups were constituted two days after the election. New parties that have not yet joined a European party family - as well as alliances between parties from different European party families - are included under "Others".

Results of the European Elections 2024

Provisional distribution of seats for the 2024-2029 legislative period



Distribution of seats at the end of the 2019-2024 legislative period





Austria

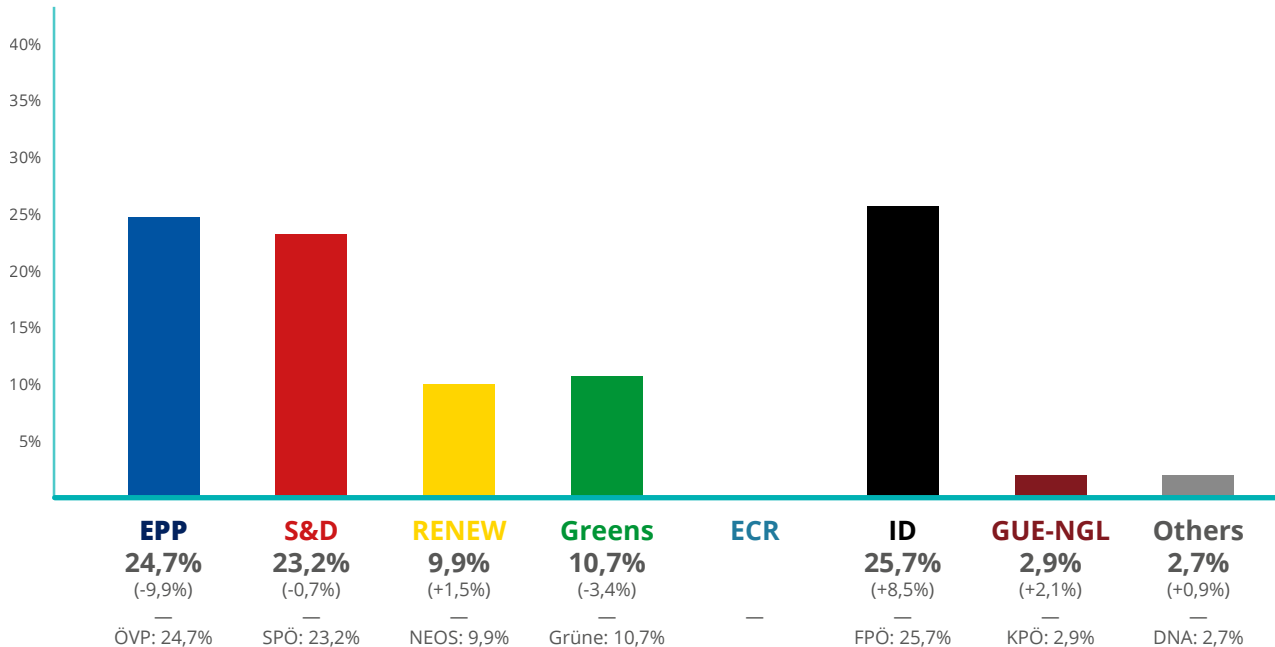


20 Seats

Threshold: 4%



56%



Seats 5 5 2 2 0 6 0 0



Largest Party

The right-wing nationalist FPÖ is leading the national polls with 28%. Its party leader Herbert Kickl is already describing himself as the “People’s Chancellor”. The party, which governs in three federal states in coalition with the ÖVP, is decidedly counterproductive at the federal level, mobilises “against the system” and belongs to the ID faction at European level.



Noteworthy Party

The Christian Democratic ÖVP is experiencing turbulent times. After election victories under Sebastian Kurz, it is now struggling with his aftermath, and heavy defeats in the European and national elections are looming. Chancellor and party leader Karl Nehammer is a fighter and positions himself as a reasonable statesman. In terms of European politics, the party is part of the EPP.



Lead candidates



Dr. Reinhold Lopatka
Die neue Volkspartei (ÖVP)



Harald Vilimsky
Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)



Andreas Schieder
Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ)



Key developments

In Austria, the public debate has recently focused mainly on national issues. The ÖVP-Greens coalition is taking advantage of the time up to the national elections in September to implement numerous domestic policy measures, such as the housing package. The area of conflict between economic policy on the one hand and the European Green Deal on the other hand remains dominant at the European level. The ÖVP rejects major EU projects such as the deforestation directive, the renaturation law and the supply chain directive.

The fight against illegal migration remains one of the most important issues. The asylum and migration pact is seen as a first step in the right direction. What is needed now, it is said, is to continue in a consistent manner. A Russian espionage scandal involving several people close to FPÖ, who are leading the polls, does not appear to be harming the party. Prior to the European elections, on the other hand, the Greens were occu-

pled with the character of their young lead candidate Lena Schilling, formerly of Fridays for Future.

According to post-election surveys, almost every second person (44%) said that they had discussed immigration and security very frequently in recent weeks. This was followed by the issues of environmental and climate protection (33%) and the economy (32%). Immigration clearly dominated among FPÖ voters, while the economy was the second most important issue among ÖVP supporters.

Analysis

It is the first time that the FPÖ has won a nationwide election: this is a first for the Alpine republic. The FPÖ profited most from the general dissatisfaction among voters. The campaign and the rhetoric of lead candidate Harald Vilimsky exceeded previous FPÖ boundaries. They want to end the "EU madness", a possible "Auxit" was hinted at and the EU was portrayed as a warmongering force in the Ukraine conflict. The FPÖ won this election with their radical rhetoric and by poisoning the social climate. It can be concluded from the FPÖ's election success that the rhetoric in the national election campaign will be similar.

The ÖVP did better than predicted: with 24.7% (-10 percentage points), it is only one percentage point behind the FPÖ and thus managed to successfully mobilise its own supporters and, given the circumstances, were still able to get five seats. Although the result is painful for the ÖVP, it is much better than expected. ÖVP Chancellor Karl Nehammer and FPÖ party leader Herbert Kickl have already been selected as candidates for the chancellorship in the upcoming national elections in the autumn. The election campaign has already begun.



Belgium



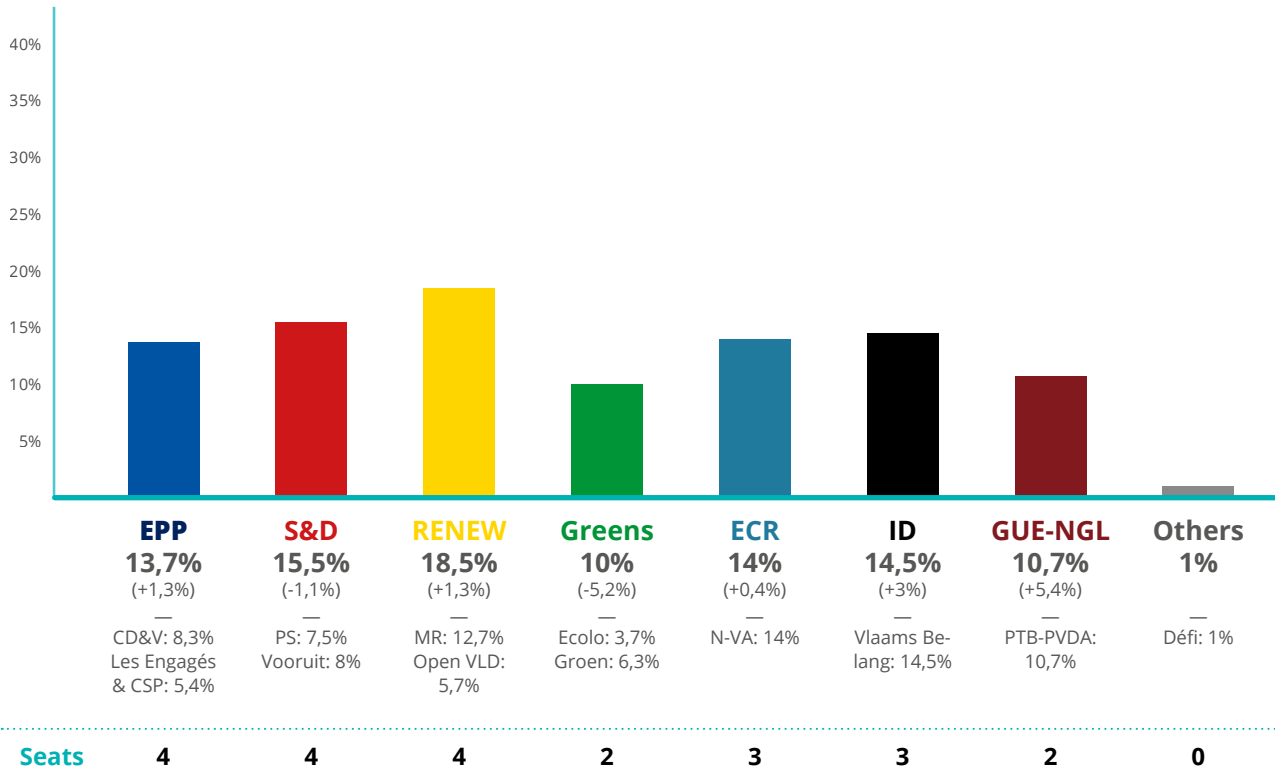
22 Seats

Threshold: 0%



90%

Compulsory voting



EPP 13,7% (+1,3%)
CD&V: 8,3%
Les Engagés & CSP: 5,4%

S&D 15,5% (-1,1%)
PS: 7,5%
Vooruit: 8%

RENEW 18,5% (+1,3%)
MR: 12,7%
Open VLD: 5,7%

Greens 10% (-5,2%)
Ecolo: 3,7%
Groen: 6,3%

ECR 14% (+0,4%)
N-VA: 14%

ID 14,5% (+3%)
Vlaams Belang: 14,5%

GUE-NGL 10,7% (+5,4%)
PTB-PVDA: 10,7%

Others 1%
Défi: 1%



Largest Party

Vlaams Belang (VB) is a right-wing populist, separatist and somewhat radical party whose main concern is to achieve independence for Flanders. It is a Eurosceptic party and is against a multicultural society. The VB is in the opposition at national level and at European level it is part of the ID Group.



Noteworthy Party

The Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA) is a right-wing conservative Flemish party, which used to hold more radical views but has since become more moderate. The party is in the opposition at national level, although this could change based on the current election result; in terms of European policy, it is a member of the ECR, but is considering switching to the EPP in the new legislative period.

Lead candidates



Tom Vandendriessche
Vlaams Belang (VB)



Marc Botenga
Partie du Travail de Belgique (PTB)



Wouter Beke
Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams (CD&V)



Key developments

The European elections in Belgium were overshadowed by the national and regional elections, which also took place on 9 June. The country has seen a marked polarisation between the political camps, which has intensified in recent times, with the right-wing populist Vlaams Belang on the one hand and the Marxist PTB-PVDA on the other. The regions also remain polarised, with French-speaking Wallonia drifting politically towards the left and Dutch-speaking Flanders to the right.

The election campaign focused primarily on economic policy issues such as purchasing power and unemployment benefits. Migration was the main theme at European level, with an emphasis on the asylum and migration pact finalised under Belgium's Council Presidency.

Although Brussels is home to many EU institutions, including the European Parliament, and Belgium still held the EU Council Presidency at the time of the election, European campaigning was limited, and European issues remained in the background. This is particularly surprising given that some well-known, popular Belgian political personalities ran for the European Parliament. They included Elio di Rupo (PS), former Prime Minister and Walloon Prime Minister since 2019, and Sophie Wilmès (MR), former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

Analysis

As the European election campaign was largely overshadowed by the national elections, it was expected that the results would align with the national ones. This was largely the case, although the right-wing populist Vlaams Belang is the strongest party at EU level, followed by the right-wing nationalist N-VA. This had been predicted in polls, but in the end only applied to the European elections and not at national level, where the N-VA narrowly came in first. However, at the end of the day, both parties have three seats in the new European Parliament. The changes in seats in Belgium, with the Liberal MR gaining a seat and the Green Ecolo party losing one, reflect the trend at European level that can also be seen in the national election results. The distribution of seats otherwise remains stable, as Belgium is represented by many parties without an election threshold. Overall, what these elections show across Europe, namely a political shift to the right, also applies in Belgium.



Bulgaria



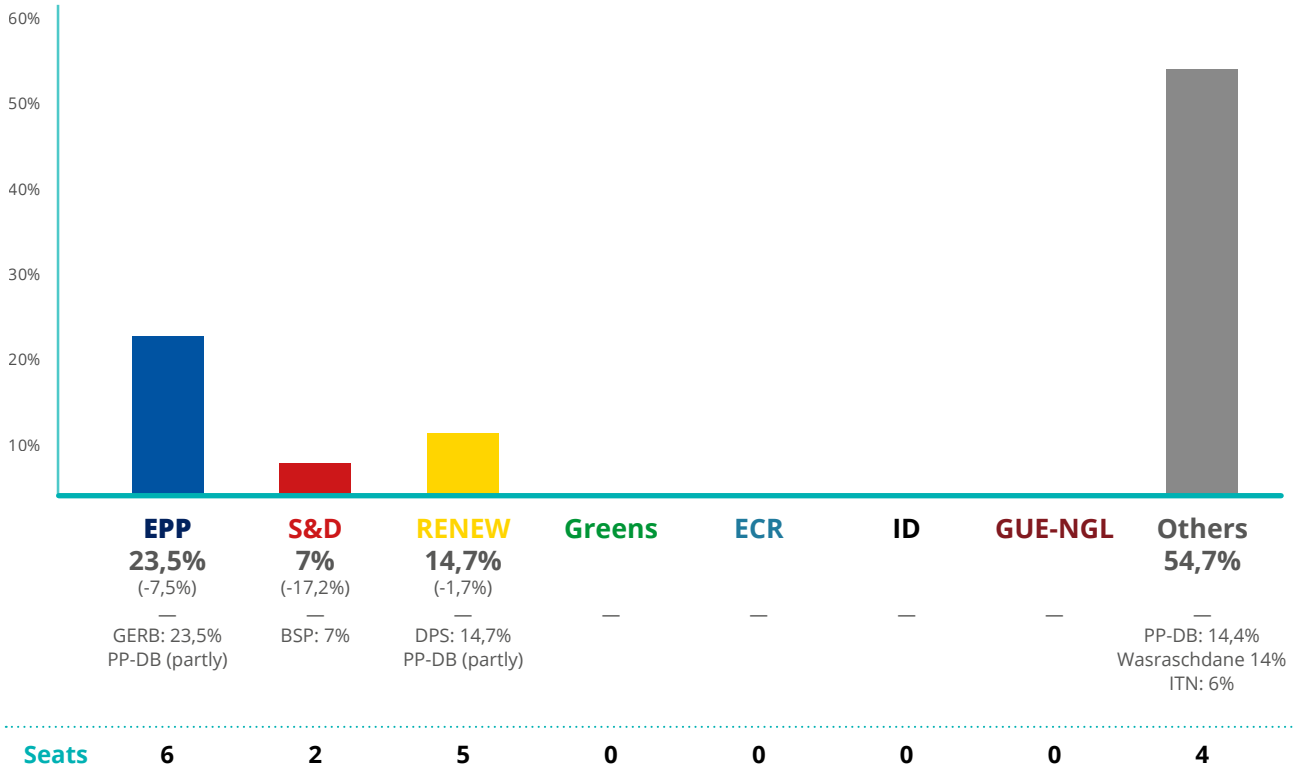
17 Seats

Threshold: 0%



32%

Compulsory voting



Seats **6** **2** **5** **0** **0** **0** **0** **4**



Largest Party

The GERB-SDS is an alliance of the parties “Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria” (GERB) and “Union of Democratic Forces” (SDS). GERB was founded in 2006 as a conservative, pro-European party. SDS grew out of a merger in 1989 and has been developing along Christian Democratic lines since 1998. Both parties are EPP members.



Noteworthy Party

The PP-DB is a two-party alliance. “We Continue the Change” (PP) was founded in 2021 with social liberal leanings (not affiliated at EU level). “Democratic Bulgaria” (DB) was founded in 2018 and consists of: “Yes, Bulgaria”, and “Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria” (DSB), which was founded in 2004 and is also a member of the EPP on European level.

Lead candidates



Rossen Scheljaskow
GERB-SDS



Nikola Mintschew
PP-DB



Dschewdet Tschakarow
DPS



Key developments

The recent political instability in Bulgaria, with its frequent new elections, continued in the run-up to the European elections. In March 2024, attempts to implement the “rotation” agreed as a compromise when the government was formed in 2023 and the replacement of Prime Minister Nikolay Denkov (PP-DB) by Deputy Prime Minister Maria Gabriel (GERB) at the head of the cabinet, proved unsuccessful. Early parliamentary elections were therefore also held in Bulgaria on 9 June (for the first time together with the European Parliament elections).

The national election campaign therefore overshadowed the European campaign. Voter turnout is traditionally low in European Parliament elections but tends to be slightly higher in national elections. There was some speculation before the elections as to whether holding the two elections at the same time might have a positive impact on the turnout for the European elections.

GERB and PP-DB ran a clearly pro-European election campaign; DPS and the populist ITN also adopted a pro-European stance. The far-right Vassrashdane party managed to gain ground by attracting sympathies for Russia. The BSP officially purports to be pro-European, but as the successor party to the BKP before 1989, also has sympathies for Russia. Domestic policy issues, such as the Green Deal, agricultural subsidies, energy policy and future coalitions in the EU Parliament, were crucial in addition to foreign policy.

Analysis

This year’s European elections were held at the same time as the early parliamentary elections. Voter turnout in European elections is traditionally low in Bulgaria; in 2024, numbers were similar to those of 2019. Voter turnout in the parliamentary election held at the same time was also around 30%, an all-time low that can be explained by voter apathy in this sixth parliamentary election in just two years.

The campaign for the European Parliament elections fell behind due to the campaign for the national parliament. Representatives of the pro-Russian Vassrashdane party tried to fuel fears of a NATO war against Russia. The BSP submitted a motion for a special parliamentary session to reject the deployment of Bulgarian troops to Ukraine. Bulgarian officials have denied on multiple occasions that Bulgarian troops are to be sent to Ukraine.



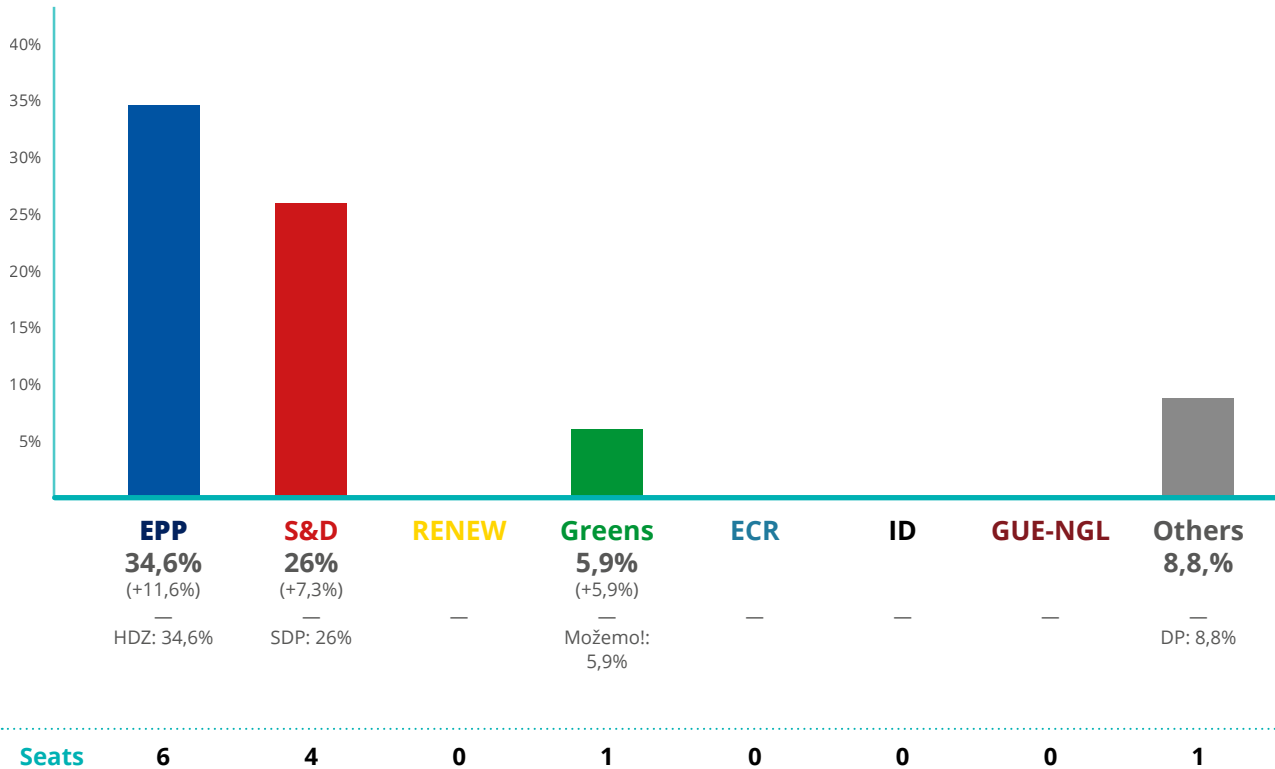
Croatia



12 Seats
Threshold: 5%



21%



Largest Party

Leaning to the centre right, the HDZ is a Christian democratic party that has once again led the government since the elections in April. It is moderately conservative and pro-European. Having won the most seats in recent decades, it has continuously been involved in government since 2011. In European political terms, it is part of the EPP.



Noteworthy Party

Most recently, "Domovinski pokret" (DP) has gained popularity and support among voters from the right-wing and conservative spectrum. Issues such as immigration, inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to rising right-wing radicalism and populism, benefiting the party in terms of its development. It is not yet part of any political group at European level.



Lead candidates



Andrej Plenković
Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ)



Biljana Borzan
Koalicija SDP



Ivan Penava
Domovinski pokret (DP)



Key developments

The rise of right-wing parties with anti-globalist agendas and the spread of populism are key factors that influenced domestic political events in the run-up to the European elections. Parliamentary elections were held in April 2024, leaving “Hrvatska demokratska zajednica” (HDZ) under Andrej Plenkovic and its partners with a relative victory, albeit dependent on a coalition partner.

Out of a possible 151 parliamentary seats, HDZ and partner parties won 61, which were initially not enough to form a majority. May saw negotiations concluded with right-wing nationalist Domovinski pokret (DP), the formation of a majority and establishment of an HDZ-led government. The centre/left coalition (Rijeke Pravde) and other minor parties remained in opposition.

Disagreements between the coalition partners remained unresolved, particularly in connection with the rights of the Serbian minority in Croatia as well as with educational and cultural policy.

Key issues in the 2024 European elections can be divided into the following areas: economic challenges, including inflation, economic development and growth, as well as the energy crisis, national security and foreign relations. Discussions on legal reforms and combatting corruption defined the course of the election campaign.

Analysis

The 2024 European elections reflect the dynamic processes taking place at political level. Inefficiency and accusations of transparency towards the government provided a basis for stronger criticism of the HDZ from the opposition. However, the HDZ was able to maintain its dominance on the political stage and won the majority of votes by placing a strong focus on economic growth and greater security for the population. The SDP focused on left-wing and social policies – its brand core – putting it in second place. Možemo! combined left-wing, green and progressive policies in an attempt to attract young voters by placing an emphasis on green policies and corruption issues, leaving it with one seat in the European Parliament. Domovinski pokret (DP), also now holding a seat, represented the right-wing populist and sovereigntist faction which spread anti-globalist ideologies through the prism of euro-scepticism. The centre-left IDS coalition failed to secure the votes needed to qualify for a mandate, even though it formally exceeded the 5% electoral threshold.



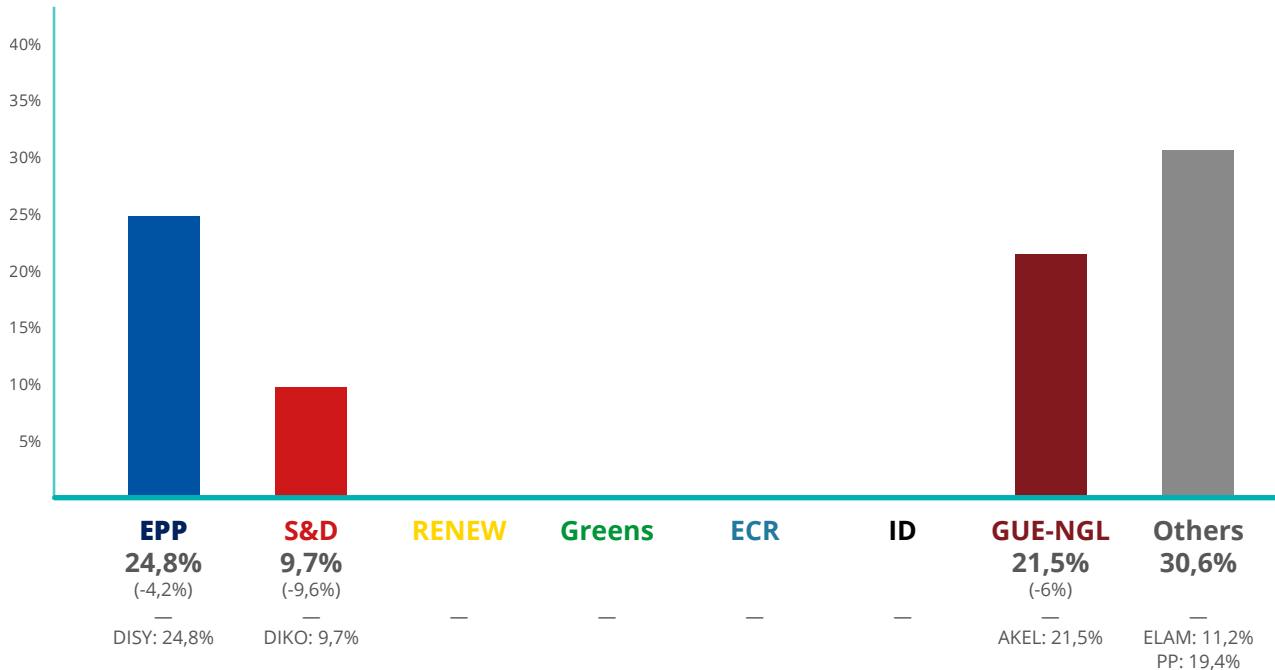
Cyprus



6 Seats
Threshold: 1,8%



59%



Seats: 2 1 0 0 0 0 1 2



Largest Party

The forecasts and polls ahead of the European elections revealed intense competition for first place between the right-wing DISY (Democratic Rally) and the left-wing AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People). Shortly before the election, DISY, a member of the EPP Group, led by just under one percentage point and was therefore forecast to win.



Noteworthy Party

The third and fourth seats are being contested by the far-right ELAM (National Popular Front) (10.5%) and the centrist DIKO (Democratic Party) (10%). The pan-European phenomenon featuring the rise of the extreme right also applies to Cyprus, with ELAM set to enter the European Parliament for the first time. It remains to be seen which European parliamentary group it will join.

Lead candidates

There were no lead candidates in Cyprus.



Key developments

On 9 June, over 700,000 Cypriots voted in the European election, while at the same time voting for their local representatives. However, as shown in surveys, an overwhelming majority of Cypriots (76%) are dissatisfied with the simultaneous holding of local and European elections. Although the parties' election campaigns for the European and local elections officially took place independently of each other, in practice they ran in parallel and concurrently.

Fifty years after partition, the Cyprus issue remains an unresolved problem for the island republic and continues to dominate the political discourse. Other key topics were the handling of the country's natural gas reserves, migration and the impact of the war in Ukraine on the country.

With the war in Gaza and the geographical proximity to Syria, Lebanon and Israel leading to a rapid increase in the number of people arriving by sea, in the months leading up to the elections, Cyprus intensified its cooperation with Greece, Israel and Egypt, particularly in the area of security.

Analysis

In Cyprus, the centre-right DISY emerged as the winner, leading its head, Annita Demetriou, to emphasise that the time had come for renewal and change. In Cyprus, around one in four of eligible voters voted for DISY, corresponding to a share of 24.8% and helping the party retain its two seats (re-election of Louka Furla and election of Mihai Hadjipandela). The almost 20% achieved by Youtuber Phidias Panagiotou as an independent candidate sent a political shock wave through Cyprus. Running without party affiliation, he astonishingly came close to the percentages achieved by the two major parties DISY and AKEL, while at the same time overtaking historical Cypriot parties such as DIKO and EDEK. The far-right ELAM and DIPA were also unable to reach his approval ratings. As a result of Phidias Panagiotou's success, AKEL lost one of its two EP seats, while EDEK lost its only seat. The rise of the far-right ELAM, which entered the European Parliament for the first time, is set to change the political landscape in Cyprus.



Czechia

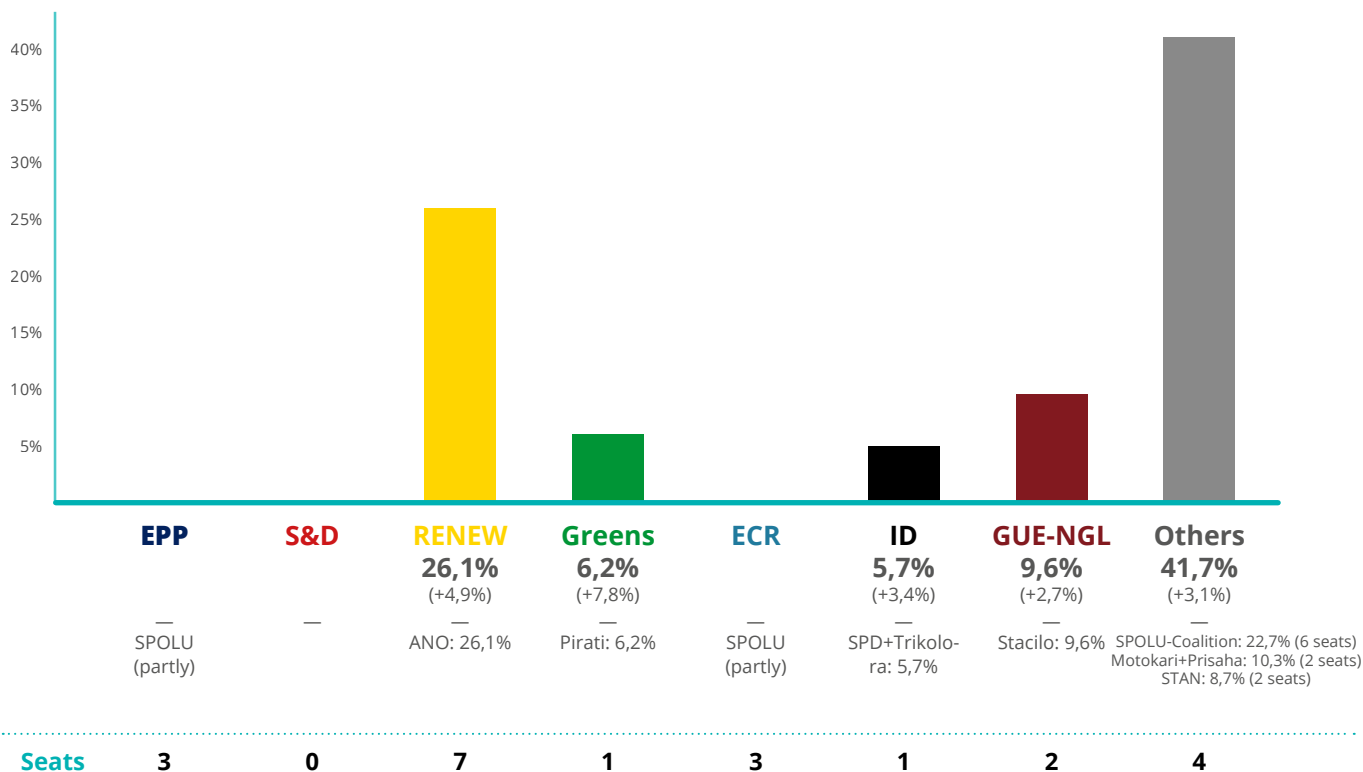


21 Seats

Threshold: 5%



36%



Largest Party

The opposition party ANO (Renew) of former Prime Minister Andrej Babis benefited from the increasingly tense mood among Czechs regarding the work of the five-party coalition. With hard-hitting reforms, tax increases, inflation etc. gnawing away at people's spending power, Babis struck the right populist tone.

Noteworthy Party

The anti-European, populist, ultra-right movement is also gaining ground in Czechia. For example, Jindrich Rajchl's (PRO) anti-European narrative is similar to that of Orbán or Fico. Although he clearly failed to get over the 5% electoral threshold in the European elections, politicians like him are shaping the negative EU discourse in the country.

Lead candidates

Klára Dostálová
ANO 2011(ANO)

Alexandr Vondra
ODS/EKR - SPOLU-Coalition

Luděk Niedermayer
TOP09/EVP - SPOLU-Coalition

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Key developments

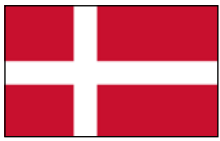
Elected to office in 2021, the five-party coalition (including EPP parties) is falling behind in the polls in the face of global crises and tough domestic reforms, to the benefit of ex-Prime Minister Babis and his populist, anti-European narrative. The EP elections were therefore seen as a first test for the general election due at the end of 2025. Despite strongly divergent European positions, the SPOLU alliance of the EPP parties KDU-CSL/TOP09 and the ODS (ECR) also entered the EP elections as an electoral alliance. ANO, SPOLU and the localist STAN shaped the narrative, with the ANO predominantly critical/negative and the SPOLU/STAN positive to varying degrees. It soon became clear how difficult it is for pro-European parties to counter the narrative of populists and nationalists on migration, the Green Deal, etc.

The common thread running through the European election campaign was the pro-EU versus anti-EU position of the parties. The opposition camp made up of the ANO, the Motorists' Protest Party, the "Enough is enough" movement, communists and the extreme-left used migration, the Green Deal and veto rights as points of attack. The EPP parties belonging to the ruling Czech coalition came under pressure in the European elections which were declared as a referendum on their work yet got off lightly compared to their coalition partners.

Analysis

Elections in Czechia are increasingly characterised by electoral alliances. In addition to the ruling SPOLU ("Together") alliance of KDU-CSL/TOP09 (EPP) and ODS (ECR), the Motorists' Protest Party and the Communists managed to cross the 5% electoral threshold. With their anti-EU campaign, the latter two can be considered as the election winners, each gaining two seats thanks to protest votes. Motorists, communists and right-wing extremists (SPD) campaigned on the dissatisfaction in the country, fear of the "green dogma", and against the Brussels ban on combustion engines and its "migration diktat".

Former Prime Minister Babis (ANO) won the election with a national-conservative, left-wing populist anti-campaign, although he himself helped shape the Green Deal, migration policy etc. until 2021 and even personally signed treaties. Until now, ANO has belonged to the Renew parliamentary group. However, it is unclear whether the seven future MEPs will remain there. The high proportion of protest votes is noteworthy. The ruling SPOLU alliance (including the EPP parties KDU-CSL/TOP09) suffered minor losses, but these could have been much worse. The clear losers, on the other hand, were the governing STAN and the Pirates, both of which focused strongly on Europe.



Denmark

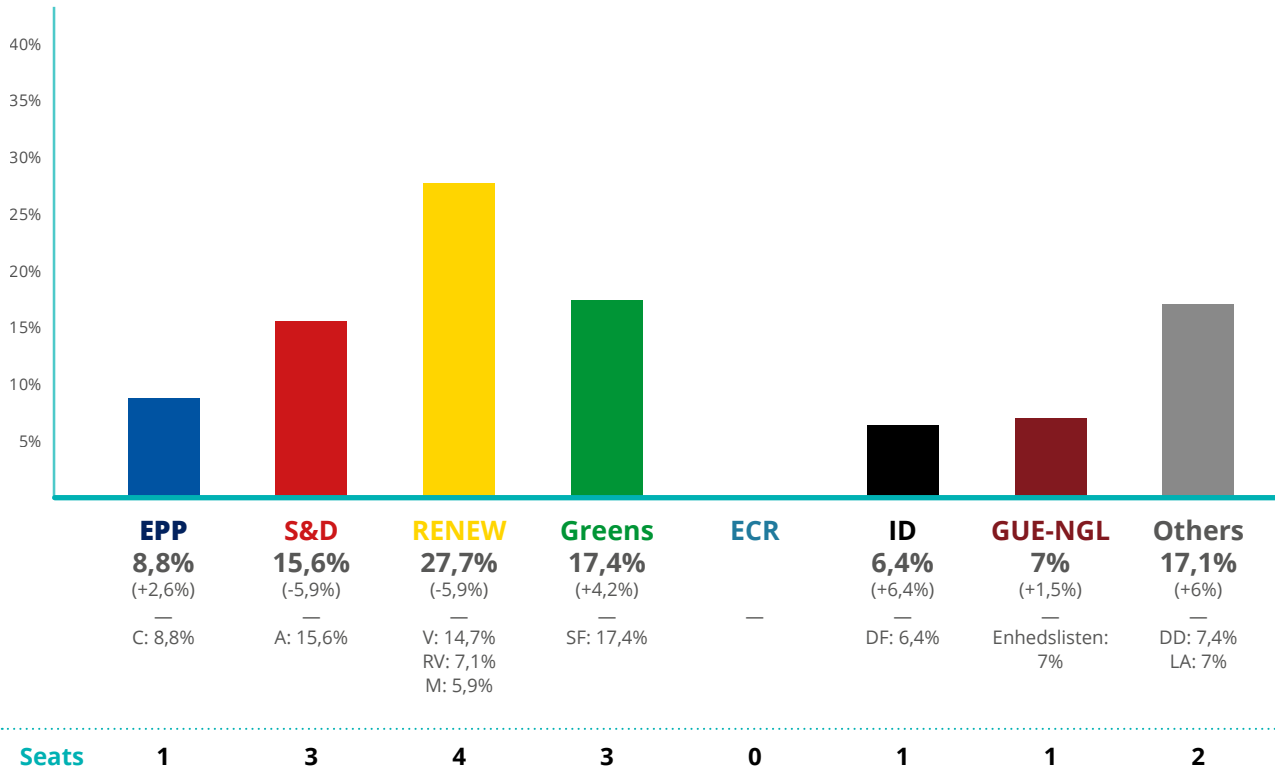



15 Seats

Threshold: 0%




58%





Largest Party


The Socialist People's Party (SF) is a moderate eco-socialist party. It was founded in 1959 and has supported several left-wing coalitions in recent years, including the current government of Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. After hitting a low point in the 2015 parliamentary elections (4.3%), the party has steadily recovered and aligns with the Greens/EFA on European level.




Noteworthy Party

The liberal-conservative party Venstre (Renew) has provided several prime ministers in the past and is part of the government. In terms of policy, it is in favour of a stricter spending and a tougher stance of refugees. Following its success in the 2019 European elections, the party split and founded new parties, resulting in a decline in voter support.


Lead candidates



Christel Schaldemose
Socialdemokratiet (A)



Kira Peter-Hansen
Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF)



Niels Flemming Hansen
Det Konservative Folkeparti (C)

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Key developments

Eleven parties battled it out in Denmark for the 15 European Parliament seats in the run-up to the 2024 European elections. Two new parties have emerged since the 2019 elections, namely the Moderates and the populist Denmark Democrats. The current Danish governing coalition is made up of the Social Democrats, the Moderates and the liberal Venstre led by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. The Social Democrats have led Denmark along one of the hardest lines in migration policy in Europe. The Social Democrats are popular among the people thanks to this stance, and because of Frederiksen's clear support for Ukraine. The liberal Venstre party, on the other hand, which was successful in the last European Parliament elections, is down in the polls, not least due to the splits and formations of new parties in recent years.

One of the most important topics in Denmark, alongside defence and foreign policy, was how to tackle climate change. Providing support for Ukraine is a high priority, particularly in the context of the Russian war against Ukraine. The topic of immigration and integration was also very much on the agenda during the election campaign, particularly the question of whether Denmark should participate in the EU solidarity mechanism for the relocation of migrants.

Analysis

In Denmark, voter turnout fell from 66.08% in the 2019 election to 58.23% in 2024. After the Social Democrats currently in power had fought neck-and-neck in the election campaign with the Socialist People's Party, it is surprising that the latter party emerged as the strongest force in this race. Disagreements arose in particular on the issue of immigration: the Socialist People's Party want to participate in the EU solidarity mechanism for the relocation of refugees, while the Social Democrats favour national migration policy solutions. As in the other Nordic countries, the perceived relevance of climate change is also reflected in the election results of the SF (part of the Greens) as well as in the poor performance of the right-wing populists, contrary to the European trend. The Conservative People's Party, Denmark's strongest party within the EPP Group, once again managed to secure a seat in the European Parliament in this election. The Liberal Alliance, entering the EU Parliament for the first time, plans to join the EPP.



Estonia

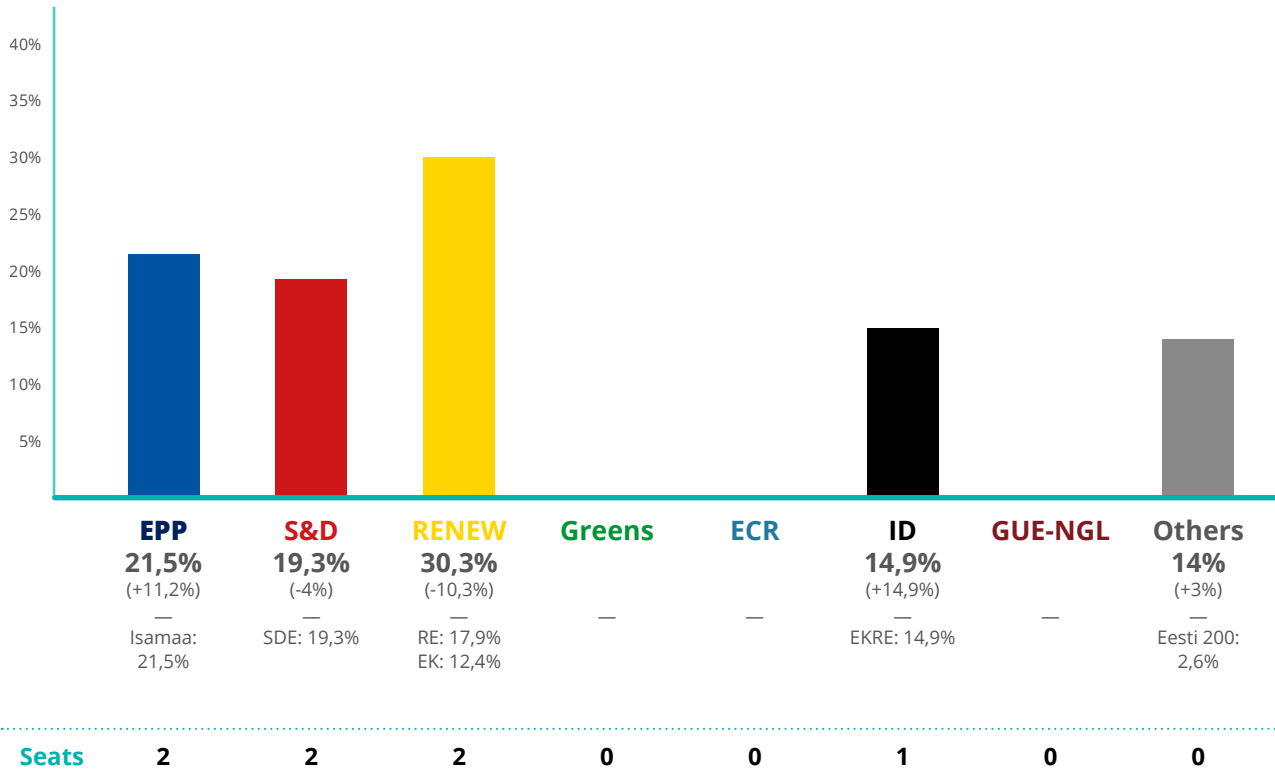


7 Seats

Threshold: 0%



38%






Largest Party

Isamaa ("Fatherland") is a national-conservative party that emerged from the Estonian independence movement. It represents Christian Democratic values with a key focus on security together with the social market economy. It is the largest opposition party on the national level and belongs to the EPP on the European level.




Noteworthy Party


The Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE) is a nationalist right-wing populist party of EU sceptics. After it was founded in 2012, it gradually gained more and more support and became established in the party system. It is part of the opposition on the national level and belongs to the ID on the European level.




Lead candidates



Riho Terras
Isamaa



Marina Kaljurand
Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond (SDE)



Urmas Paet
Eesti Reformierakond (RE)

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Key developments

In terms of domestic politics, since 2022 the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has dominated day-to-day politics, with cross-party consensus in supporting Ukraine. There have been repeated Russian attempts to exert its influence in recent years, in terms of cyber security for example. Given the plans to establish a purely Estonian-speaking education system, one particular challenge in recent times has been how to deal with the Russian minority living in the country. The numerous regional and global crises caused a slight decline in the country's gross domestic product in 2022 and 2023, with economic recovery being aggravated by the subsequent marked increase in energy prices.

Although Estonia is a very pro-European country, the European elections are traditionally only given low priority with turnout usually below 40 percent despite low-threshold electoral arrangements. The European election campaign focused on security policy issues relating to Russia's hybrid war, strong foreign policy positioning in support of Ukraine and strengthening the EU and NATO integration. There are only marginal differences between the various parties on these issues, so that the recently difficult domestic political situation and the current criticism of the government also played a role, explaining the success of the opposition parties.

Analysis

There was a slight increase in turnout again in 2024 with the population showing sustainable loyalty towards the EU. Turnout in Tallinn and Tartu reached 47% and 51.3%, compared to 33.6% in the north eastern constituency of Ida-Viru where the majority of people speaks Russian. The opposition party Isamaa is seen as the clear winner of this election. Its strong results in national polls are reflected in the EU election.

The Reform Party of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas loses one seat and continues to face the challenge in terms of domestic policy of plugging the holes in the budget. Eesti 200 is another government party that did not do well (2.60%), clearly losing a seat in the European Parliament. The right-wing national EKRE saw a slight increase in its share of the vote but this was not enough to gain a second seat. The Centre Party lost votes for the second time in succession (compared to 22.35% in 2014) and also had to bury its hopes of a second seat. Jüri Ratas (EPP) achieved the third-best result of all candidates (33,623 votes). Riho Terras (EPP) has been given a mandate for the second time. Marina Kaljurand is the strongest candidate once more with 45,631 votes and remains the leading force of the Social Democrats.



Finland

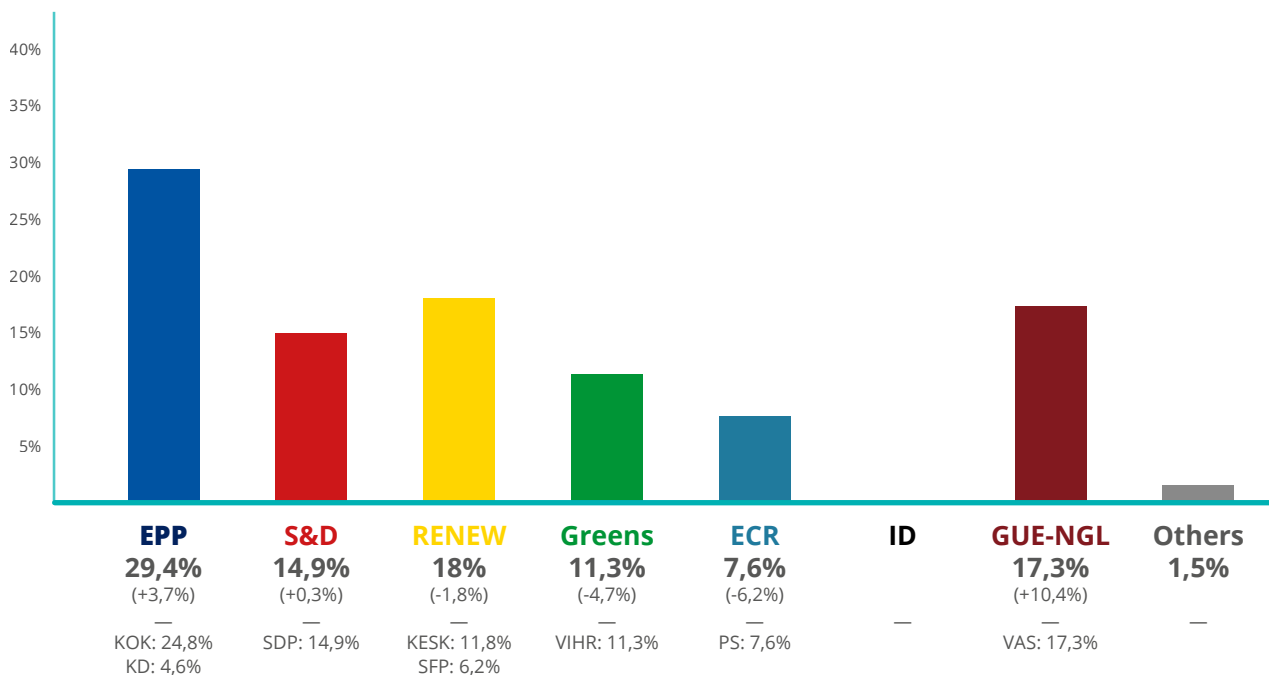


15 Seats

Threshold: 0%



42%



Seats: 4 2 3 2 1 0 3 0



Largest Party

The liberal-conservative National Coalition Party (Kokoomus) advocates the market economy, competition and freedom of the individual, together with entrepreneurial initiative and economic efficiency. It has led a centre/right government since the general election in 2023 and is a member of the EPP on the European level.



Noteworthy Party

The right-wing nationalist party "Finns Party" represents nationalistic values and is a party of EU sceptics. In 2023, it left the Identity & Democracy group (ID) because of its pro-Russian stance and joined the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) in the EU Parliament. On the national level it is part of the current centre/right government.



Lead candidates



Tanja Airaksinen

Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (SDP)



Mika Aaltola

Kansallinen Kokoomus (KOK)



Sanna Antikainen

Perussuomalaiset (PS)



Key developments

When the National Coalition Party (Kokoomus) won the last general election in 2023, the internationally known Prime Minister Sanna Marin (Social Democrats) resigned. The new Prime Minister Petteri Orpo leads a four-party coalition with the right-wing nationalist True Finns, the Christian Democrats and the Swedish People's Party. Top priority recently has been given to economic policy with corresponding austerity reforms and strengthening the EU. Plans to restrict people's right to strike led to comprehensive waves of strikes. This was manifested in slightly decreasing approval for the government parties. One striking aspect before the election was the large number of women standing as candidates for the European Parliament. For the first time, Finland has 15 seats in the European Parliament, one more than previously.

Just before the election day, Finland's foreign policy focused on the situation in Gaza. Parties on the left in particular advocated greater support for the Palestinians. The issues of climate change and forestry policy were also important, as well as immigration with the associated discussion about the Rwanda model. The issue of security took absolute priority particularly in the context of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, including providing support for the country under attack.

Analysis

The turnout in Finland increased slightly from 40.8% at the 2019 elections to 42.4% at the 2024 elections, but remains on a low level. The National Coalition Party (Kokoomus), which is part of the EPP group and currently also leading the government, was able to defend its position as strongest force during the European elections. However, it is remarkable that the Left Alliance overtook the Social Democrats to take second place. This is due on the one hand to the well-known lead candidate and the pro-Palestinian stance in the Gaza conflict, as well as cleverly conducted communication on social media platforms. The same also applies to the Greens who benefit from the relevance of climate change as well. The poor result of the right-wing populist Finns Party is also remarkable: recent polls indicated that they were the third strongest force, but the election result saw them land in the last-but-one place with just about eight percent. Like the other Nordic countries, Finland here is bucking the European trend for rising support of the right-wing populists.



France

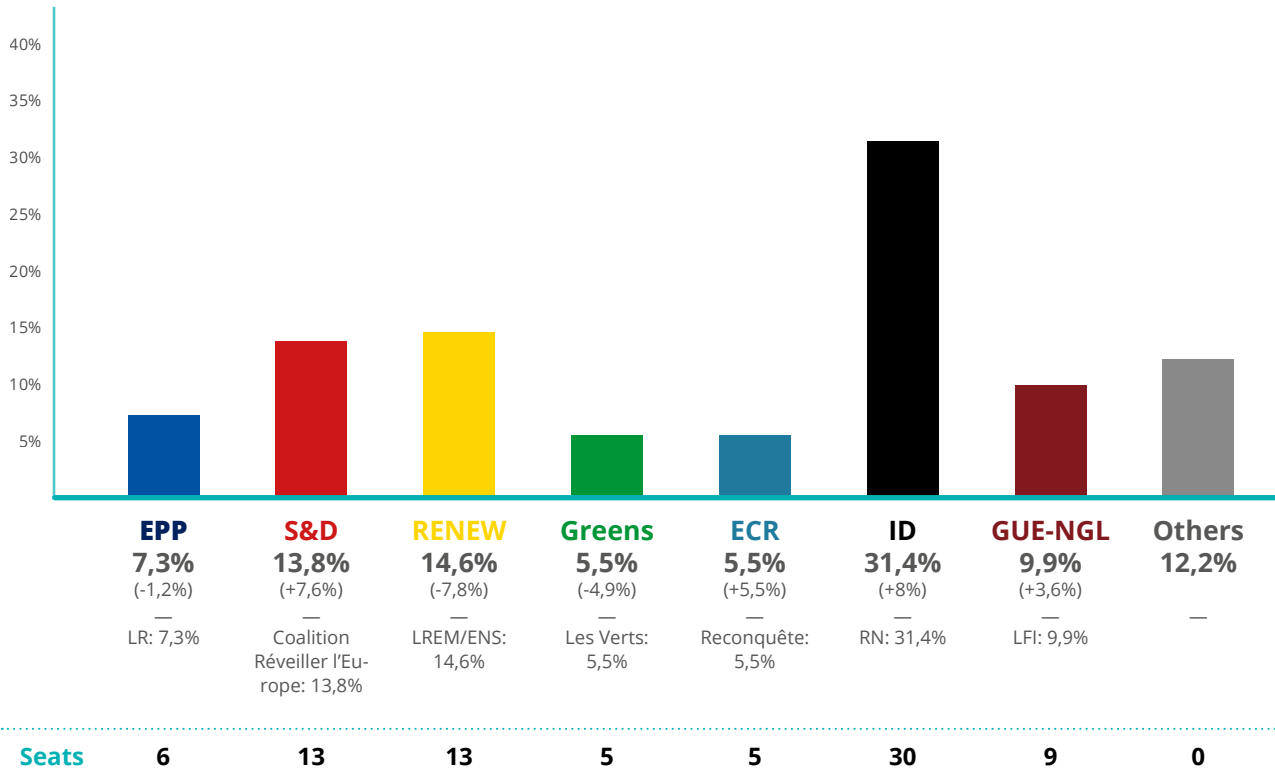


81 Seats

Threshold: 5%



52%






Largest Party

The Rassemblement National (RN) is a right-wing populist party of Euro sceptics that belongs to the ID on the European level. After turning its back on “Frexit”, it pursues a so-called “traffic light” strategy: green = support (Erasmus+), amber = acceptance but with a need for reforms (Schengen), red = rejection (EU expansion).




Noteworthy Party


Since 2017, the governing “Renaissance” party (formerly the En-Marche movement) has tried to establish itself as the only pro-European party in the French party landscape. However, its support has declined continuously in recent years. The European elections played a significant role for the fate of the party, which hitherto constituted the largest section of the Renew fraction in the EU Parliament.




Lead candidates



Jordan Bardella
Rassemblement National (RN)



Valérie Hayer
Renaissance (LREM/ENS)



François-Xavier Bellamy
Les Républicains (LR)



Key developments

The composition of the French National Assembly makes it complicated for President Macron to govern the country. The prime example for this is asserting the pension reform with clause 49.3 of the constitution. The disputes about the immigration law resulted in a cabinet reshuffle in January 2024. Immigration, climate change, the purchasing power and security remain the key topics for the European elections. The way the government reacted to the blockades of French farmers was triggered by its experience with the yellow vest movement that had caused political instability in France in 2018. Just one month before the European elections, President Emmanuel Macron saw his will to reform being thwarted once again. Violent unrest in the French overseas territories of New Caledonia meant that the government in Paris proclaimed a state of emergency there.

Most commentators refer to national consequences of the European elections. Macron's move to dissolve the National Assembly is said to be the worst crisis faced by the 5th Republic, according to Bruno Le Maire, the Minister of the Economy. The title on the front page of the conservative daily newspaper Le Figaro was "Le choc" (The Shock), while the left-wing paper "Libération" spoke of the state president going for "high stakes". An analysis by Le Monde saw France in a state of total limbo between the European elections and the dissolution of Parliament.

Analysis

According to an IPSOS poll in May 2024, the word most frequently used (46%) to describe the mood in France with regard to Europe is "worried", although a majority is proud to belong to Europe (59%). The RN seems to have accurately picked this up, winning over many voters by distancing itself from Frexit and with its traffic-light strategy. Renaissance with its pro-European course failed to provide an answer to the worries of the French people (purchasing power, migration).

The results of the European elections confirm the growing strength of the right-wing populists already observed on the national level. The fact that Bardella won the elections although he clearly revealed his ignorance about European issues during the election debates indicates that the European elections served above all to chastise the current national government. A poll about a hypothetical general election published in March revealed that RN may gain 243-305 seats in the National Assembly which could possibly give them an absolute majority. This means the Prime Minister would come from the RN. LR lost two seats and will have six deputies (7,3%; 2019: 8.48%).



Germany

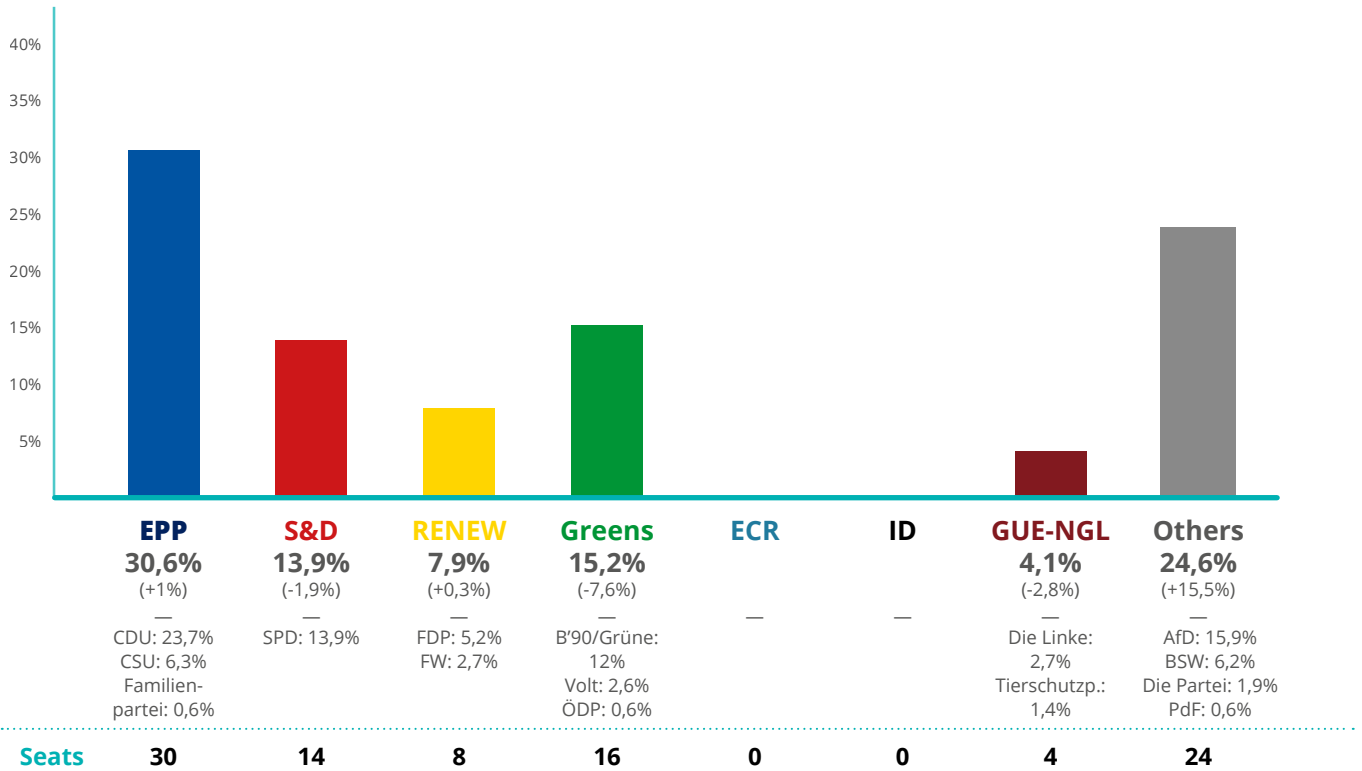


96 Seats

Threshold: 0%



65%



Largest Party

The joint election programme of the CDU and CSU, which are part of the EPP in the European Parliament, focused on the topics of freedom, security and prosperity. The leading candidate Ursula von der Leyen (CDU), who was running solely for the post of Commission President, led the election campaign together with Manfred Weber (EPP party and parliamentary group leader, CSU).



Noteworthy Party

The right-wing populist party Alternative for Germany was still ranking high in the polls a few months ago. However, several scandals surrounding the party's leading candidates overshadowed the election campaign and led to their being excluded from the ID group. The left-wing nationalist party "Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht", which contested an election for the first time with its pro-Russian stance, used this to its advantage.

Lead candidates



Ursula von der Leyen
CDU



Katarina Barley
SPD



Maximilian Krah
AfD



Key developments

The CDU and the CSU have steadily gained percentage points since their defeat in the 2021 federal election and their resulting position in opposition. The ruling coalition of SPD, Greens and FDP, led by Chancellor Scholz, has lost support since the parliamentary election, mainly due to internal disputes. The coalition is facing major challenges in domestic and foreign policy in light of the Russian offensive war in Ukraine, the escalation of the conflict in the Middle East and the rise of the AfD. Coverage of the final phase of the European election campaign was dominated by a number of physical attacks on politicians and election workers from various parties, a cyber-attack on the CDU party headquarters and a police officer stabbed to death by an Islamist.

According to surveys, voters were particularly concerned with the topics of peacekeeping, social security and immigration. European policy issues hardly featured in the election campaign and dissociating from the right remained one of the most

important themes. This was also an appeal to the young electorate, as citizens aged 16 and over were allowed to vote in the European elections in Germany for the first time. The SPD in particular criticised the openness of the leading EPP candidate von der Leyen to cooperating with the right-wing conservative group of European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) under Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. If she is not re-elected as Commission President, the Greens would have the right to nominate her for the top German position in Brussels in accordance with the coalition agreement.

Analysis

The German election result is a slap in the face for the government leadership made up of the SPD, Greens and FDP. All three governing parties lost votes, which can also be attributed to the ongoing discord between the coalition partners. Alliance 90/ the Greens have been the hardest hit. Together, the coalition partners only have 31%, but they have ruled out new elections as a consequence of the election result.

By contrast, nearly all the opposition parties gained votes: The clear election winners are the CDU and CSU, who have regained their position as the leading political force in Germany. The AfD came second, recording the strongest gains despite the various scandals surrounding its leading candidates. New start-ups and small parties, including the BSW, Volt and the Free Voters, also made gains in the election. The Left Party, as the only opposition, lost a huge number of votes and halved its previous result, which can be attributed to the splintering of the party following the founding of the left-wing nationalist BSW.



Greece



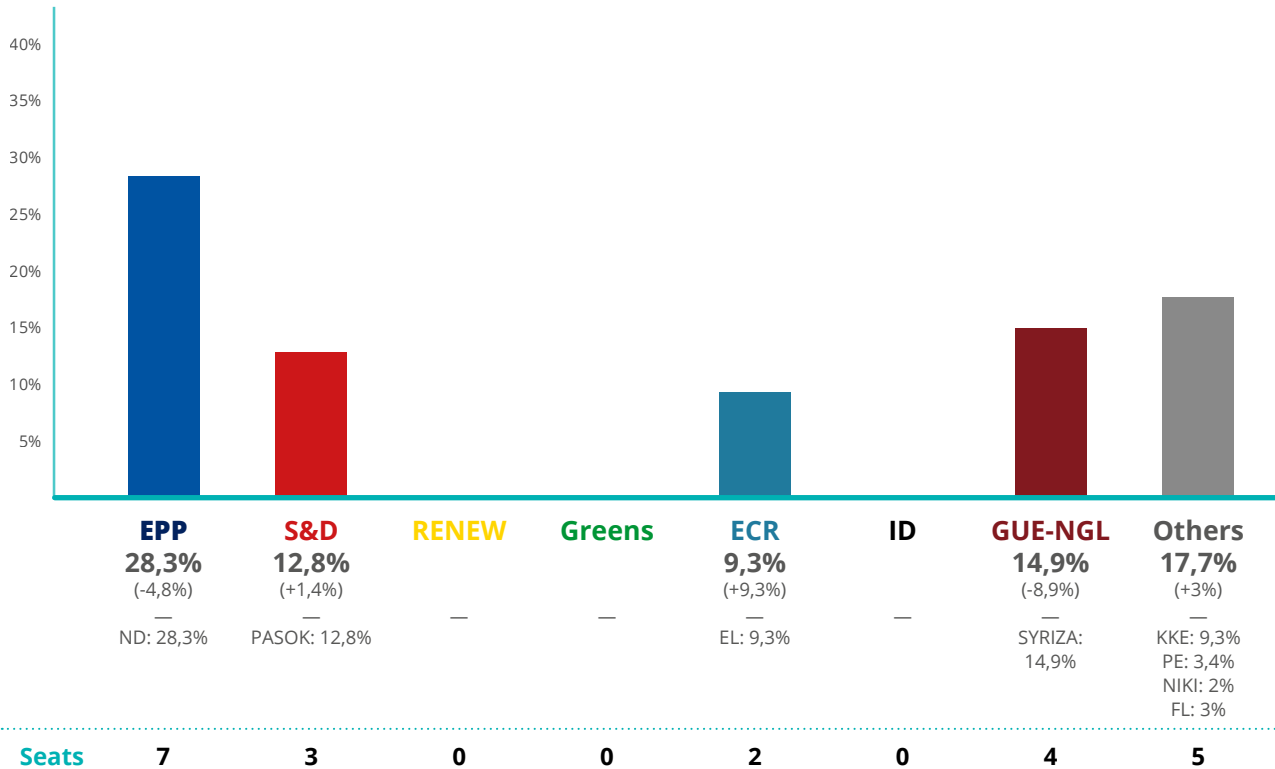
21 Seats

Threshold: 3%



41%

Compulsory voting



Seats: EPP (7), S&D (3), RENEW (0), Greens (0), ECR (2), ID (0), GUE-NGL (4), Others (5)



Largest Party

The liberal-conservative governing Nea Demokratia party (ND) was founded in 1974 after the end of the military dictatorship and pursued a decidedly pro-European course right from the beginning. It unites different political tendencies in Greek society. On the European level, the party belongs to the EPP.



Noteworthy Party

The opposition party SYRIZA (alliance of radical left-wing parties) was founded in 2004 initially as an electoral alliance and became a political party in 2012. It aims to bring about fundamental changes in politics and society, rejects the EU in its current form, and is a member of the GUE/NGL group at the European level.

Lead candidates

There were no lead candidates in Greece.



Key developments

This year's election to the European Parliament was the first time that Greek citizens were able to cast postal votes. The governing Nea Demokratia party (ND) experienced growing concern about a possible protest vote. The main factors in this development consisted in the emergence of extreme right-wing parties, persistent inflation that has shaken confidence in economic policy, and a disastrous railway accident in Tempi that put a question mark over the government's actual safety promise. These factors put the ND in a defensive position, with the European elections being described pre-emptively as a crucial test that would reflect the current political mood in the country.

Even so, the ND dominated the political debate in the run-up to the elections, also because most of the population felt that the opposition was not a reliable alternative. Part of the voters expressed their dissatisfaction with ND's policies for various reasons, including inflation, security and a more liberal agenda (e.g. the recent introduction of same-sex marriage). This mood explains why parties to the right of the ND gained 20 percent of the vote.

Analysis

A low turnout of 41.4 percent and a clear increase in support for the right-wing extremists are the outstanding features of the European elections in Greece. The ND was still the leading force despite considerable losses. Neither SYRIZA nor PASOK suffered losses to the same extent. SYRIZA gained four seats, two less than in the 2019 European elections, while PASOK gained three seats which is one more than before. The parties to the right of the ND emerged in a stronger position. The Elliniki Lysi doubled its share of the vote, the Niki emerged as a stronger force and the Foni Logikis gained the last seat for Greece in the new European Parliament. The governing party fell well below its result of 33 percent from the 2019 European elections, which had actually been its target. It only received 28.31 percent of the votes, with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis making a public admission that "we failed to reach our target." The low turnout was detrimental above all for the governing ND party, as voters seem to have been of the opinion that this was the right moment in time to express their dissatisfaction while the government of the country itself was not at stake.



Hungary

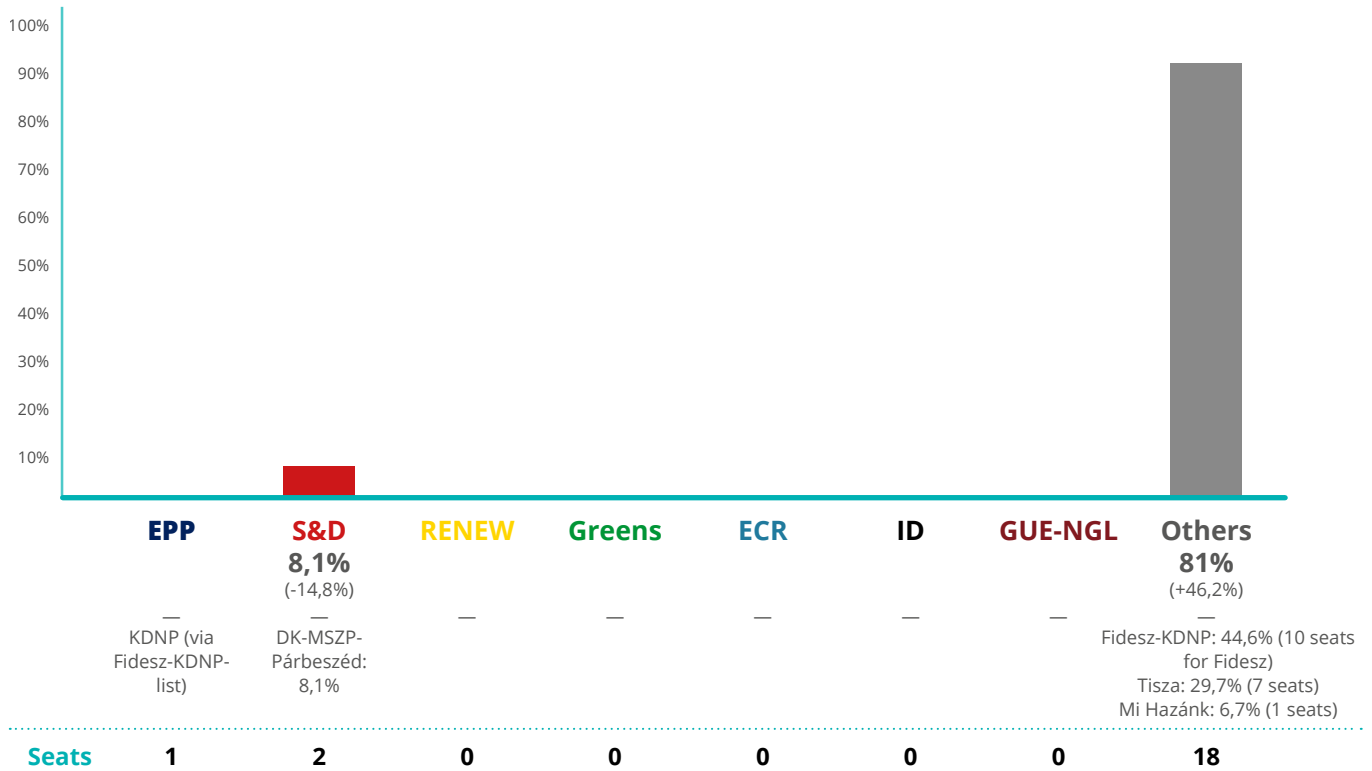


21 Seats

Threshold: 5%



59%



KDNP (via Fidesz-KDNP-list)

DK-MSZP-Párbeszéd: 8,1%

Fidesz-KDNP: 44,6% (10 seats for Fidesz)
Tisza: 29,7% (7 seats)
Mi Hazánk: 6,7% (1 seats)



Largest Party

Since the 2010 national elections, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's right-wing nationalist Fidesz has always had a two-thirds parliamentary majority in an alliance with the KDNP (EPP). In the run-up to the election, it was expected that the currently non-affiliated Fidesz would remain the strongest political party in Hungary – despite current conflicts with the European Parliament and the Commission.



Noteworthy Party

Within just a few weeks, the new Tisza party rose to become the strongest opposition force in the polls. The party is closely linked to former Fidesz politician Péter Magyar, the front man able to mobilise supporters. So far it has no clear party structure nor a programme, it is still difficult to position the party in terms of European policy.



Lead candidates



Tamás Deutsch
Fidesz-KDNP



Péter Magyar
TISZA



Klára Dobrev
DK, MSZP, Párbeszéd



Key developments

The so-called “pardon scandal” put the ruling Fidesz party under considerable pressure in February 2024, making it difficult for it to focus on its own issues during the election campaign. While the alliance of the non-affiliated Fidesz and EPP-affiliate KDNP is still unchallenged in all polls and is the strongest political force by a wide margin, a new political movement led by the former justice minister’s ex-husband, Péter Magyar, managed to reach over 20% in the polls in less than three months. Last year, real wages fell for the first time since Viktor Orbán came to power in 2010. Moreover, some 20 billion euros of EU funds earmarked for Hungary remain frozen.

During the election campaign, the ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition stylised the election as a vote on “war and peace”, suggesting that, by not providing military support to Ukraine, the EU could be “kept out” of the Russian war of aggression. Anyone not voting for Fidesz was therefore voting for “war”. Tisza, taking part in the EP elections for the first time, focused primarily on domestic issues, in particular the fight against corruption and nepotism.

Analysis

The last time Fidesz-KDNP received less than 50% of the vote was in 2004. Losing over eight percentage points and gaining just ten instead of the previous 13 seats, this was a bitter blow for the party alliance. Nevertheless, Fidesz clearly remains the strongest political force in Hungary, 15 percentage ahead of Tisza. The success of Péter Magyar’s Tisza party, which rose from nothing to just under 30% in less than three months, is remarkable. With Tisza focusing its election campaign on domestic issues, in particular corruption and nepotism, the Fidesz-KDNP government apparently had little to offer.

For the first time in its history, the radical right-wing party Mi Hazánk Mozgalom (“Our Homeland”) will be represented in the European Parliament by one MEP. All other parties lost a lot of support compared to the last EP elections. The “Democratic Coalition” vote was halved and now only has two instead of four MEPs. Momentum and Jobbik again won no EP seats.



Ireland



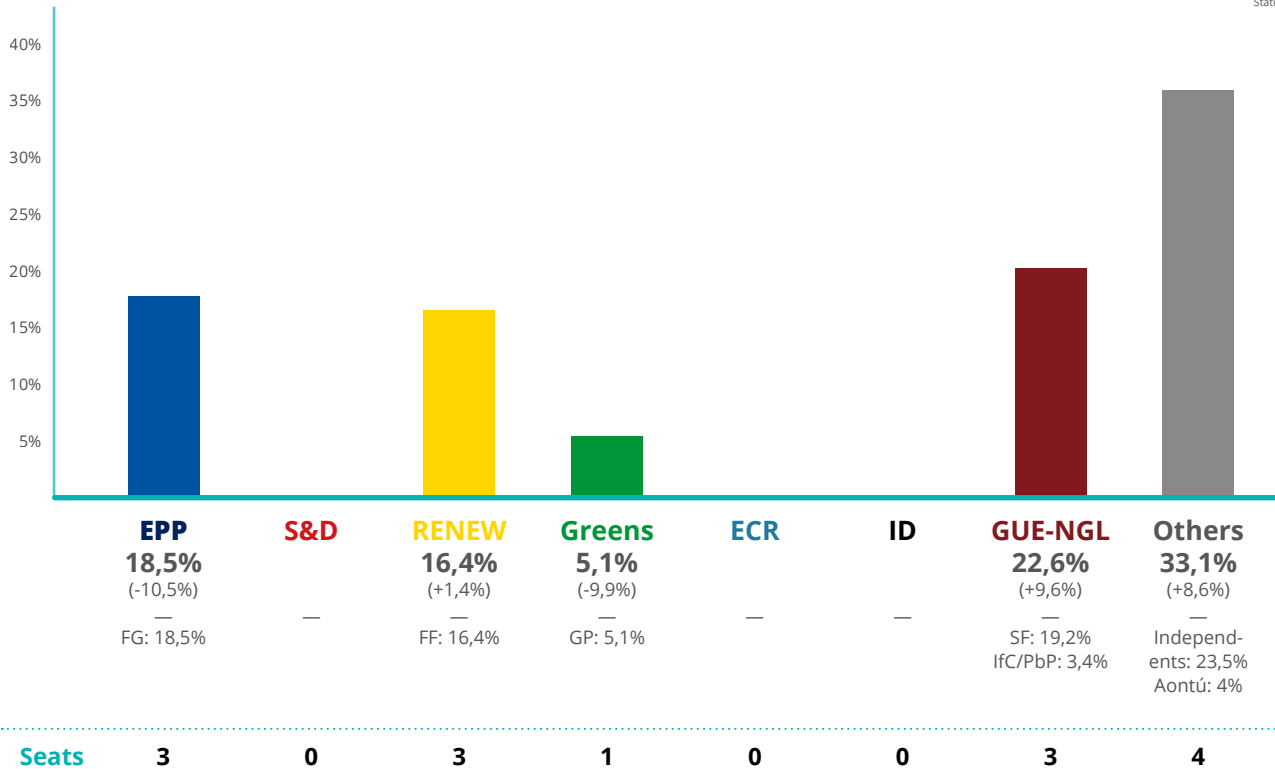
14 Seats

Threshold: 0%



50%

Status as of: 12.06.24, 16:30 h



Largest Party

Sinn Féin is a republican party that aims to bring about an end to the division of Ireland. To this end, it is also a political party in Northern Ireland (UK). In the Irish Parliament, it currently has 37 MPs and is an opposition party. On the European level it has one seat and is a member of the GUE-NGL.



Noteworthy Party

Fine Gael is a conservative people's party in the Republic of Ireland. It currently leads the government coalition and is the party of the Prime Minister. It supports EU integration and advocates a market economy, equal opportunities and security. On the European level it belongs to the EPP and currently has five MEPs.



Lead candidates



Maria Walsh
Fine Gael (FG)



Barry Andrews
Fianna Fáil (FF)



Michelle Gildernew
Sinn Féin (SF)



Key developments

Irish politics recently focused primarily on the cost of living (particularly rent and house prices) together with immigration. Large US high-tech companies such as META and Google have settled in Dublin, causing rising costs that many Irish people cannot cope with because the country is not growing fast enough. Furthermore, the latest migration deal between the United Kingdom and Rwanda has turned Ireland into the main destination for those who are threatened with deportation, thus putting further pressure on the limited housing in Ireland's big cities. This internal migration is a result of the freedom of movement agreement between the United Kingdom and Ireland. With a general election scheduled for next year, the European elections were seen as a yardstick of public opinion, as in Germany.

In addition to the issues named above, Ireland also had the same peculiarity as in the neighbouring United Kingdom that it was possible for independent candidates to stand for election. Already in the run-up to the elections, it transpired that these candidates (with widely varying political priorities who therefore couldn't be put on a regional or national list) could win a majority of the votes in many places.

Analysis

The election results are relatively favorable for the two governing parties Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, which were generally confirmed although Fine Gael lost two seats. The winner, however, is Sinn Féin, which had led the polls for weeks and increased its result from 2019 from two to now three seats. Labour and the Social Democrats did well in relative terms, while the Greens struggled, although they were able to hold on to at least one seat.

Fine Gael (EPP) was unable to keep its previous five seats, although this had been expected. The three seats won are a solid result and a confirmation of the Irish government. Overall, none of the "Irish seats" has an anti-European connotation, which is why Ireland's contribution at EU level will not change significantly compared to the last legislative period.



Italy

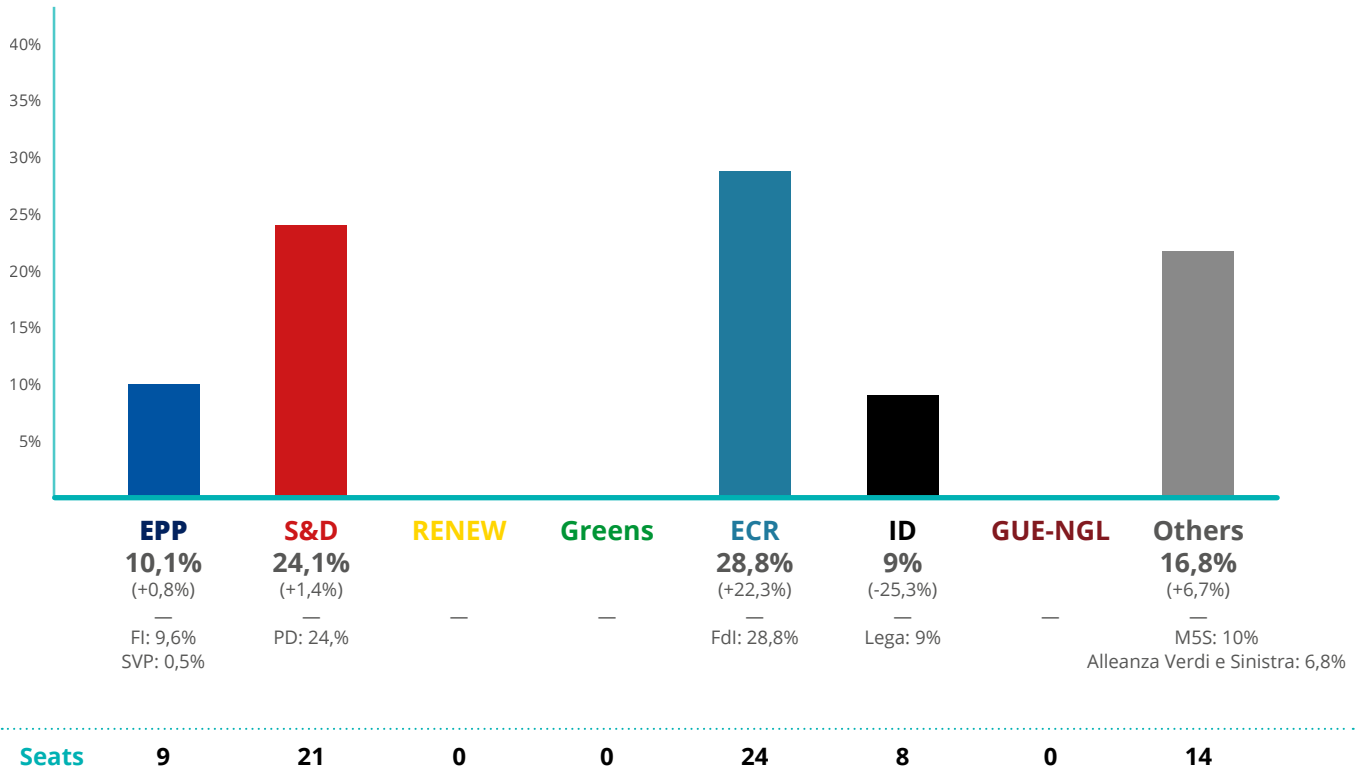


76 Seats

Threshold: 4%



50%



Seats

9

21

0

0

24

8

0

14



Largest Party

The "Fratelli d'Italia" party (FdI) of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni emerged from neo-fascist movements in 2012 and is now seen as being a national-conservative party. Since taking office, statements hostile to the EU have become rare. On the European level, the Fratelli d'Italia belongs to the ECR group, where it stands for national sovereignty and unity.



Noteworthy Party

The conservative "Forza Italia" (FI) is currently experiencing a resurgence. Following the death of the party founder Silvio Berlusconi in June 2023, foreign minister Antonio Tajani had taken over the leadership of the party, positioning it as a pro-European Christian Democrat corrective element in the right-wing government. It belongs to the EPP group in the European Parliament.



Lead candidates



Giorgia Meloni
Fratelli d'Italia (FdI)



Elly Schlein
Partito Democratico (PD)



Antonio Tajani
Forza Italia (FI)



Key developments

Italy's system of political parties has been amazingly stable since the general election in 2022 when a right-wing coalition took over the government of the country. There has scarcely been any change in poll ratings during the run-up to the European elections. Polls indicate that the "Fratelli d'Italia" party of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni enjoyed the greatest support with roughly 30 percent. Its alliance partners "Lega" and "Forza Italia" accounted for about eight percent. Thanks to the EU Recovery Fund launched after the first wave of the Covid pandemic, with Italy benefiting greatly with roughly 200 billion Euro, any anti-EU statements practically disappeared from the public domain. Compared to the 2019 European Elections, only one major change was expected: "Fratelli d'Italia" would swap its number of seats (hitherto six) with "Lega" (hitherto 29).

In terms of content, Giorgia Meloni's slogan "Con Giorgia l'Italia cambia l'Europa" (Italy will change Europe with Giorgia) underlined the Prime Minister's claim to play a key role in shaping Europe, thereby striking a cord with many voters. As EPP partner party, the election posters of Forza Italia featured the party founder Silvio Berlusconi, who died in June 2023, rather than the lead candidate Ursula von der Leyen. Questions about how the approx. 200 billion Euro from the EU Recovery Fund were used did not occur in the election campaign.

Analysis

While in 2019 the "Lega" had 29 deputies and the "Fratelli d'Italia" six, this situation has been reversed after the 2024 European elections. The "Fratelli" now has 24 deputies in Strasbourg and the "Lega" nine. This will bring about a qualitative change. In the last five years, the "Lega" and its leader Matteo Salvini had neither the ambition nor the intention to use their 29 delegates in the European Parliament to play an active role in politics on the European level.

By contrast, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and her "Fratelli d'Italia" have the aspiration to use their new weight in the European Parliament to get involved in shaping the European politics - in Italy's interests and along national-conservative lines. The future President of the European Commission will be confronted with clear demands: climate-protection policy that is less green and more business-oriented, less illegal immigration and more joint border control, less gender policy and more traditional family policy - and last but not least, a clear vote in favour of joint contraction of debts in the future.



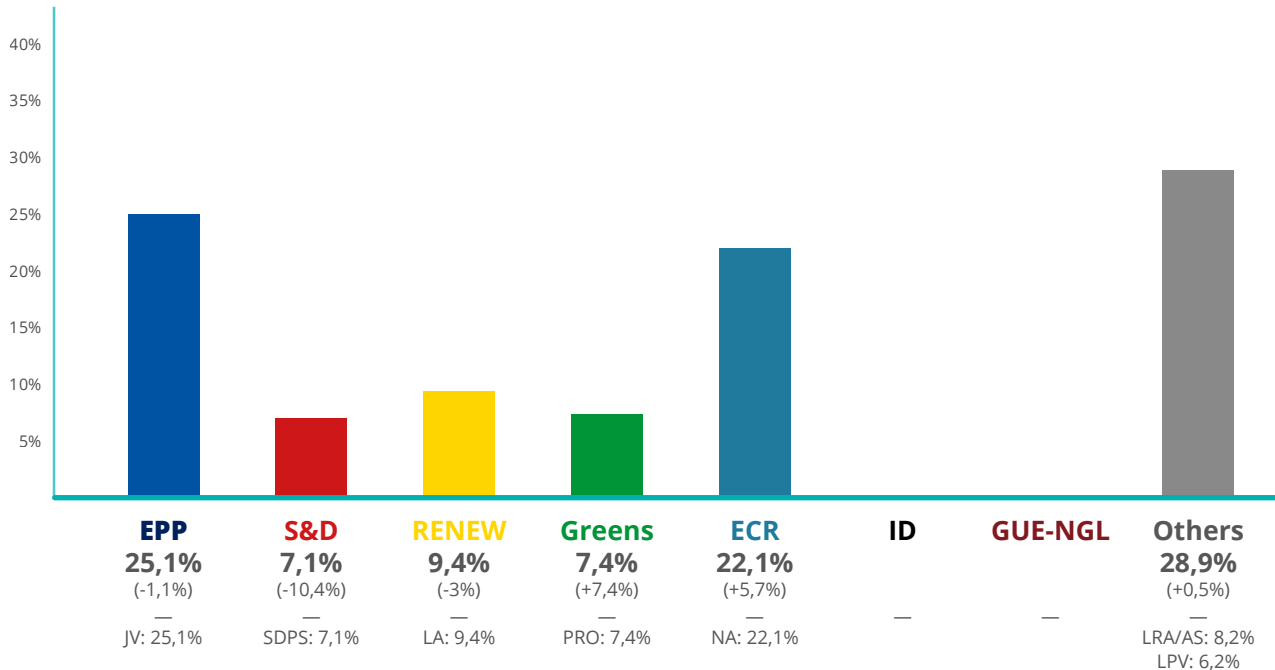
Latvia



9 Seats
Threshold: 5%



34%



Seats: EPP (2), S&D (1), RENEW (1), Greens (1), ECR (2), ID (0), GUE-NGL (0), Others (2)



Largest Party

The New Unity (Jaunā Vienotība – JV) party was founded in this form in 2011, having emerged from an alliance of several liberal-conservative parties. At national level it has been the largest party in recent years and leads the current coalition government in Riga with Evika Siliņa serving as Prime Minister. At European level, it is a member of the EPP Group.



Noteworthy Party

Founded in 2017, the Progressives are a centre/left party with social democratic and green elements. Above all, it has greatly benefited from recent developments taking place in domestic politics and, as a junior government partner, been able to translate a number of concerns into practical action. At European level, they are part of the Greens/EFA.

Lead candidates



Valdis Dombrovskis
Jaunā Vienotība (JV)



Roberts Zile
Nacionālā apvienība (NA)



Elina Pinto
Progresīvie (PRO)



Key developments

The year before the European elections witnessed key changes in Latvian domestic politics: in May 2023, Edgars Rinkēvičs, the long-serving foreign minister, was elected president. Key support came from two opposition parties (Union of Greens and Farmers as well as Progressives), which led to an autumn government reshuffle. Since then, the new governing coalition has consisted of "Jauna Vienotība" (EPP), Progressives (Greens/EFA) and the Union of Greens and Farmers (NI), although they only hold a narrow majority in parliament. The National Alliance and the "United List" party, which was founded before the last parliamentary elections, are in opposition. Evika Siliņa (Jauna Vienotība) is currently Prime Minister in place of Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš, who has since resigned and become Foreign Minister.

However, her party – which won the last European elections by a clear margin – has recently lost support among the population in the wake of the "flight spending scandal" involving her predecessor. Against the backdrop of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, foreign and security policy played a prominent part in the election campaign, as in all three Baltic states. Ukraine's possible EU membership was also a recurring theme. Another debate focus was a potential revision of the European Green Deal. From a Latvian perspective, the goals are too ambitious, and inadequate consideration is being given to various national legacy situations.

Analysis

Out of 16 lists, representatives from seven made it into the European Parliament. Despite domestic political problems, the "Jaunā Vienotība" party (EPP) won the elections, confirming its leading role in Latvian politics. It will also once again provide the country's EU Commissioner. Besides JV, the National Alliance also won two seats, with all other parties being represented with one seat. Latvia's nine MEPs are all experienced politicians, five of whom have previously sat in the European Parliament. Voter turnout increased only slightly and shows regional differences: particularly few people went to the polls in the east of the country where there is a large Russian-speaking minority. The election results could also have an impact on coalition work – the Union of Greens and Farmers is not represented in the EP and the Progressives fared worse than expected. The next elections in Latvia are due in 2025 – then at municipal level.



Lithuania

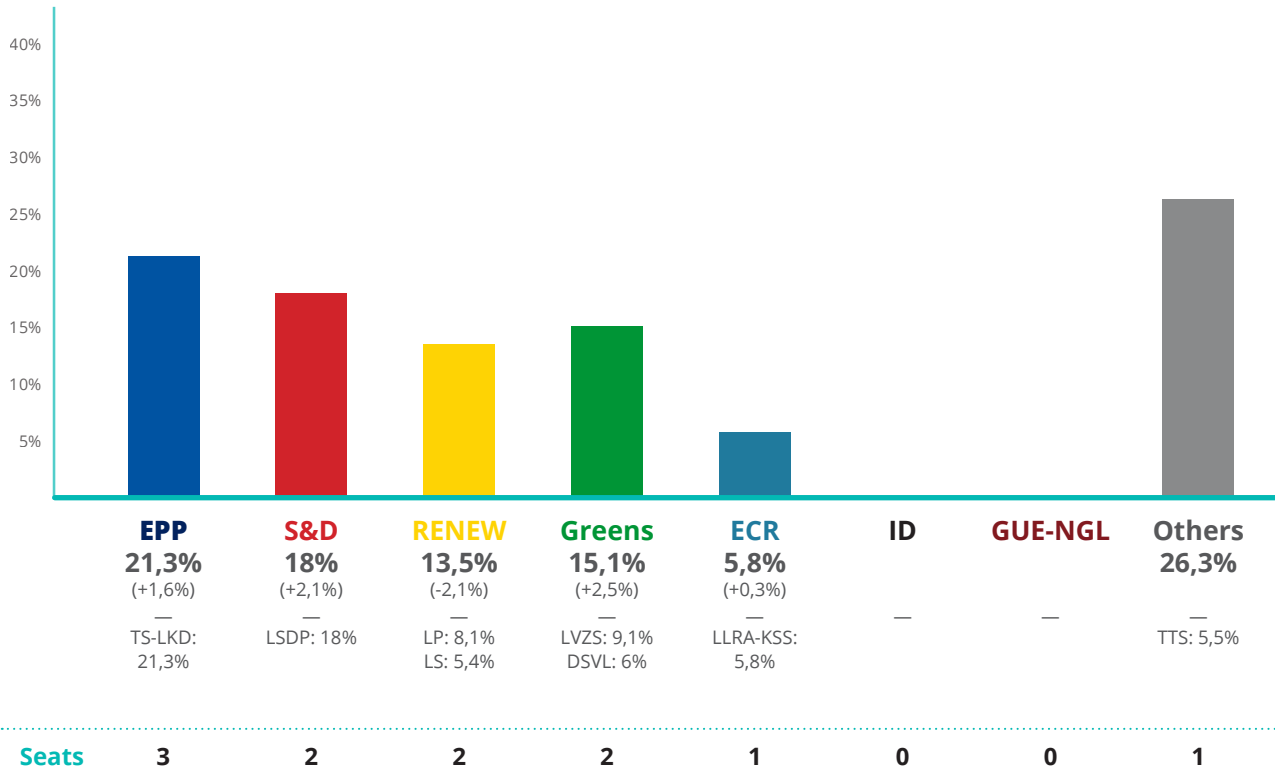


11 Seats

Threshold: 5%



29%



Largest Party

The “Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats” party (TS-LKD) is a conservative party of Christian democratic character and was founded in 1993. Its central concern is to bind Lithuania to the West while at the same time preserving Lithuanian identity. At national level, the party leads the current governing coalition; in terms of European politics, it is part of the EPP.



NACIONALINIS
SUSIVIENIJIMAS

Noteworthy Party

The new “National Alliance” party was founded in 2020, making this its debut in European elections. It represents national conservative as well as Christian positions, and sees itself as a successor to the Lithuanian independence movement. The party has not yet finalised its position either at national or at European level.

Lead candidates



Andrius Kubilius
TS-LKD



Vilija Blinkevičiūtė
LSDP



Aurelius Veryga
LVZS



Key developments

Lithuania was already in the throes of an uncommon political phase even before the European Parliament election. The European election was somewhat side-lined as it took place in a similar time frame to the presidential election as well as a referendum on dual nationality. National parliamentary elections will also be held later in the year. Domestic political developments in Lithuania are strongly defined by defence and security issues (particularly since the start of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine). In terms of party politics, the Social Democrats dominated the national and European political polls whereas the Christian Democrat-led government has lost approval among the population since the last parliamentary election.

For Lithuanian citizens, the key issue remains security and defence policy. In this context, the hope is to gain further influence at EU level, possibly through a key post within the European Commission. Other election campaign issues included migration, particularly with a view to the Belarus border and expansion of secure external EU borders. EU enlargement – in relation to Ukraine – was also a key aspect for Lithuanian voters.

Analysis

The conservative Christian Democrats are the winners of the European Parliament elections. Low turnout benefited the conservatives who did particularly well among Lithuanians living abroad and in the country's towns and cities. The TS-LKD received the most votes in the constituencies in and around Vilnius, and also managed to win over the lion's share of voters in two other major cities. The Conservatives' main rivals, the Social Democrats (LSDP), delivered a relatively disappointing performance. Many polls in fact saw them ahead of the TS-LKD, yet the actual result reveals a different picture. They are in second place, with a margin of just under three per cent, and remain in parliament with two seats.

For some of the smaller parties, the result is devastating, leaving them in a struggle for their political survival. For them, this election does not send a good signal for the parliamentary elections in the autumn. Although the Conservatives, in contrast, can now look forward to the Seimas elections in a more relaxed way with this result under their belt, they are unable to sit back in the light of a low election turnout.



Luxembourg



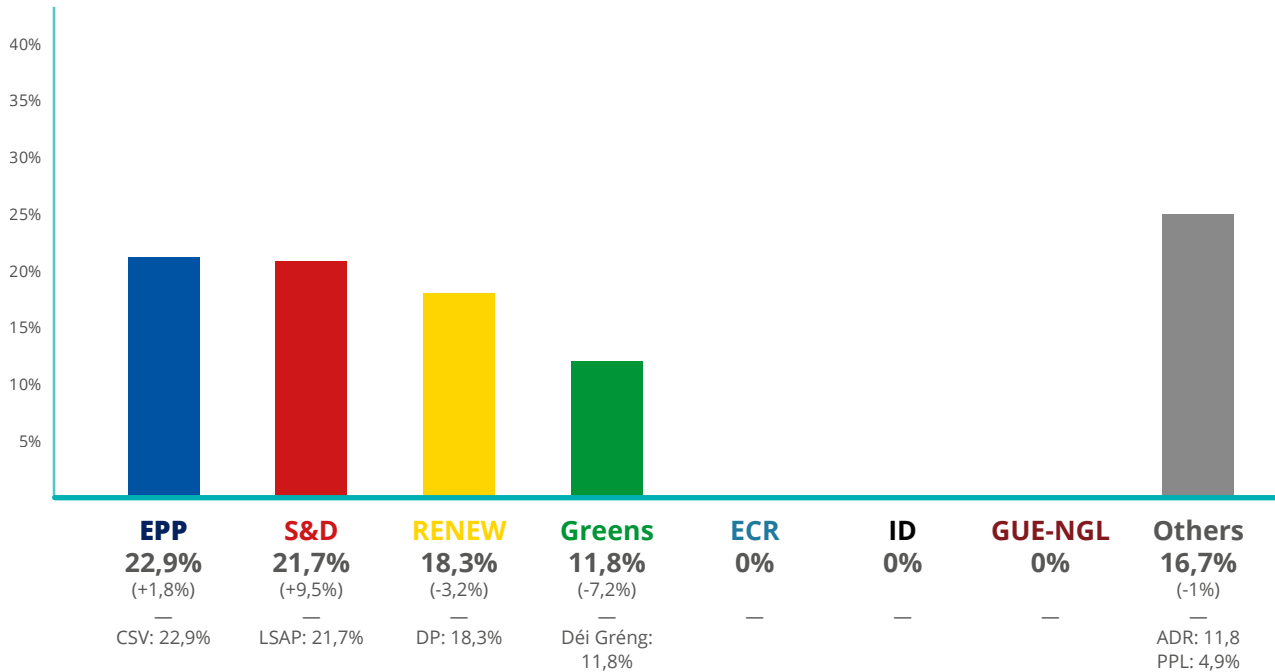
6 Seats

Threshold: 0%



82%

Compulsory voting



Seats: EPP (2), S&D (1), RENEW (1), Greens (1), ECR (0), ID (0), GUE-NGL (0), Others (1)



Largest Party

The Christian Social People's Party (CSV) is the Christian democratic party in Luxembourg and governs in coalition with the liberal DP. Following ten years in opposition, the CSV once again provides the Prime Minister in the person of Luc Frieden, having done so since November 2023. At European level, the pro-European CSV belongs to the EPP.



Noteworthy Party

The populist Alternative Democratic Reform Party (ADR) emerged as a protest party and is in opposition. It represents conservative, national values, including an emphasis on Luxembourg's sovereignty and cultural identity. It has not previously been a member of the European Parliament, but is close to the ECR.



Lead candidates



Christophe Hansen
Christlich Soziale Volkspartei



Charles Goerens
Demokratesch Partei



Marc Angel
Luxemburger Sozialistischen Arbeiterpartei



Key developments

Following the parliamentary elections in 2023, Luxembourg saw a change of government in which the coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party (DP/Renew), Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party (LSAP/S&D) and the Greens (Déi Gréng/Greens) – which had been in power since 2013 – was replaced by a coalition of the Christian Social People's Party (CSV) and DP, led by Prime Minister Luc Frieden (CSV). Recent domestic policy issues include the housing crisis, the use of nuclear energy, the closure of ING Bank accounts and the tax evasion case of a local DP politician.

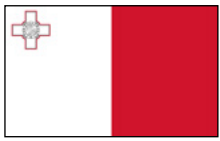
European policy issues included defence, competitiveness, social affairs and asylum policy. In general, two major topics stood out: the impending shift to the right in Europe, which politicians on the political left, such as Nicolas Schmit (LSAP), warned against, and the demand to further reduce the principle of unanimity in the EU Council. While this is still conceivable for many in foreign policy, it sparked

an anxious debate on harmonising European tax policy. Although former top politician Jean-Claude Juncker (CSV) also spoke out for majority decisions on tax issues in a newspaper interview, Luxembourg continues to insist on the so-called "tax veto" in line with the Luxembourg government's CSV-DP coalition agreement and a vote in parliament.

A decisive factor in the Luxembourgish election mode is the possibility of vote splitting, also making it possible to split one's six votes between different party lists. This means that lists with prominent candidates can make the difference.

Analysis

Overall, the CSV made a comeback as the strongest party, but not strong enough for the third seat. The liberal DP was relegated to third place on account of losses; this is where the tax scandal surrounding a DP local politician may have played a part. Surprisingly, the LSAP came second with a gain of 9.5%, which may have been helped by prominent candidates on the electoral list. Contrary to Déi Gréng's fears of losing the seat, they narrowly managed to hold their ground despite heavy losses. On par with the Greens, the right-wing populist ADR wins a seat for the first time. The election result suggests that the CSV could also provide Luxembourg's Commissioner. Although serving Commissioner and S&D lead candidate Nicolas Schmit (LSAP) put himself forward as the "logical" choice, the CSV-DP government had previously agreed on Christophe Hansen (CSV) as candidate. In contrast to Schmit, he ran successfully in the European election. On the evening of the election, Prime Minister and CSV President Luc Frieden highlighted the strong position of CSV and EPP. He also declared his support for Ursula von der Leyen for the office of Commission President.



Malta

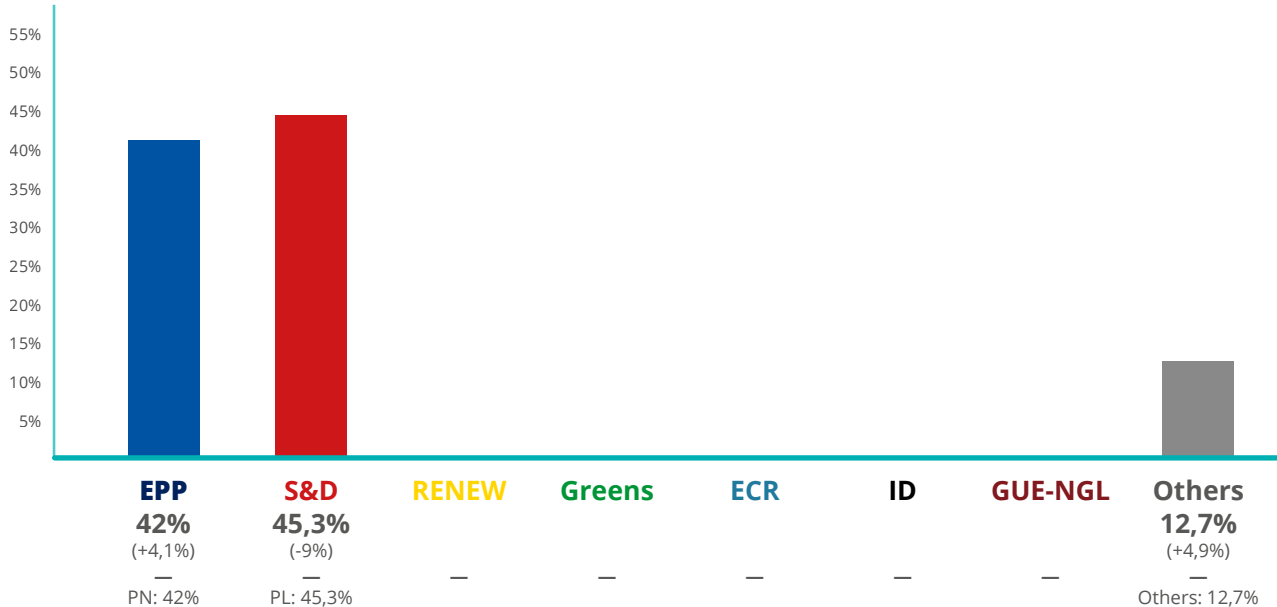


6 Seats

Threshold: 0%



73%



Seats: EPP 3, S&D 3, RENEW 0, Greens 0, ECR 0, ID 0, GUE-NGL 0, Others 0



Largest Party

In power since 2013, Malta's largest party is the Partit Laburista (PL). Despite the murder of a journalist and several cases of corruption that carried a clear PL hallmark, PL was re-elected in 2022. PL, a member of the S&D group, also has a clear lead over the Partit Nazzjonalista in the European elections too.



Erwähnenswerte Partei

The Partit Nazzjonalista is Malta's centre-right conservative EPP party. It was in government until 2013 and currently provides the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola. All the same, it lags well behind the ruling Partit Laburista in national and European polls.



Lead candidates



Alex Agius Saliba
Partit Laburista (PL)



Roberta Metsola
Partit Nazzjonalista (PN)



Key developments

With half a million inhabitants, Malta is the EU's smallest member state. Based on the British model, a two-party system has been in place since Malta gained independence in 1964: the social-democratic Partit Laburista and the conservative Partit Nazzjonalista take turns in making up the government. Other parties hardly stand a chance of getting a seat in the national or European Parliament. The Partit Laburista currently has four, the Partit Nazzjonalista two MEPs in Strasbourg and Brussels.

In view of the Partit Laburista's lead, the fact that Roberta Metsola is the first Maltese politician from the Partit Nazzjonalista to be President of the European Parliament does not appear to have any impact on the election outcome.

A few weeks before the European elections, the focus was on the exposure of a corruption scandal that led directly to the camp of the ruling social democratic Partit Laburista, and resulted in the resignation of Malta's health minister tipped to be a future EU commissioner. Alongside this, the social democrats tried to raise the issue of repatriating irregular migrants in a move to divert attention from the problems surrounding the legal-immigration policy they had introduced (golden passport scheme).

Analysis

In Malta, EPP's Partit Nazzjonalista (PN) partner party can chalk up a success: it managed to increase its share of the votes from 37.9 to 42.0 percent, while the ruling social democratic Partit Laburista slipped back from 54.3 to 45.3 percent – falling below the 50 per cent mark for the first time since 2008. The gap between the two major parties contracted to around 8,500 votes, raising hopes that the PN will return to government after the next national elections in 2027. For the future distribution of seats in the European Parliament, this means that the Social Democrats will be losing a seat, with the PN gaining one. Securing over 81,000 preferential votes (from around 270,000 voters), the current President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, can look at a historic success: never before had a candidate in Malta received so many preferential votes. Historic too is the proportion of small parties and independent candidates able to obtain over ten percent of votes. This is a challenge for the PN. Because only around 11,000 of over 23,000 votes lost by the Social Democrats went to the PN.



Netherlands

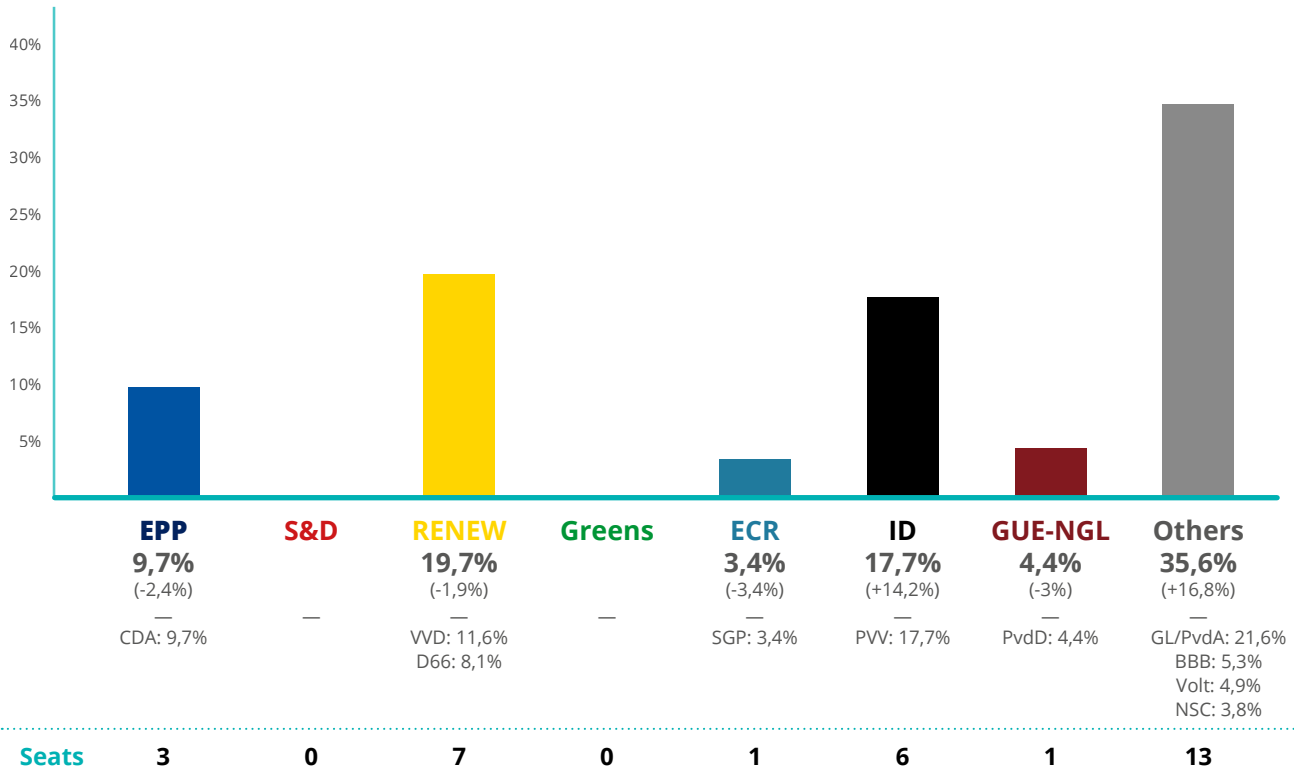


31 Seats

Threshold: 0%



46%



Seats 3 0 7 0 1 6 1 13



Largest Party

The alliance between the Greens and Labour Party (GL/PvdA) was founded in 2023 in the run-up to the national parliamentary elections around former EU Commissioner Frans Timmermans. It sees itself as a progressive counterbalance to Geert Wilders' far-right party. It has yet to define its position on European level.



Noteworthy Party

The Party for Freedom (PVV) is a right-wing populist and nationalist party whose only official member is Geert Wilders. It holds Eurosceptic views and wants to bring fundamental change to the EU. It won the 2023 parliamentary elections at national level by a clear majority and, in European terms, belongs to the ID Group.

Lead candidates



Bas Eickhout

GroenLinks/Partij van de Arbeid (GL/PvdA)



Sebastiaan Stöteler

Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)



Tom Berendsen

Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA)



Key developments

In the run-up to the European elections, the Netherlands were in political turmoil. For the first time in the country's history, the right-wing populists had emerged as the most powerful force from the early elections in November 2023, and had been trying to form a government since that time. Two weeks before the election date, this was achieved in the form of an extra-parliamentary cabinet, 50 per cent of which being made up of external experts. The right-wing liberal VVD and the new NSC and BBB parties will also be involved in government. For a long time, the developments surrounding the formation of a government overshadowed the European election campaigns of the numerous parties vying for entry into the European Parliament.

The results of the national elections were interpreted by some political observers as pointing the finger towards Brussels, while the pro-European forces hoped they could send the opposite signal by performing well in the European Parliament election. The election campaign focus did not differ significantly from the issues underlying the national elections: migration, climate action and security were high on most parties' agenda.

Analysis

The election result in the Netherlands comes with both an aura of light and shadow. At European level too, Geert Wilders' Freedom Party managed to confirm the buoyant support it received in the national polls, gaining five seats over 2019. Securing two more seats, however, the alliance of Greens and Labour Party (GL/PvdA) became the country's strongest political force – a respectable achievement many had hoped for after the early parliamentary elections in November. Other pro-European parties were also seen to make gains in these elections. Although the Christian Democrats (CDA) will in future only have three MEPs (down from five), the polls had long seen them with no more than two seats. The decidedly pro-European Democrats 66 (D66/Renew) also gained one seat (now three) and, for the first time, Volt will be represented by two Dutch MEPs. The new BBB and NSC parties (together three MEPs) are looking to join the EPP in the new legislative period – initial contacts were made even before election day and are, by all appearances, set to undergo consolidation.



Poland

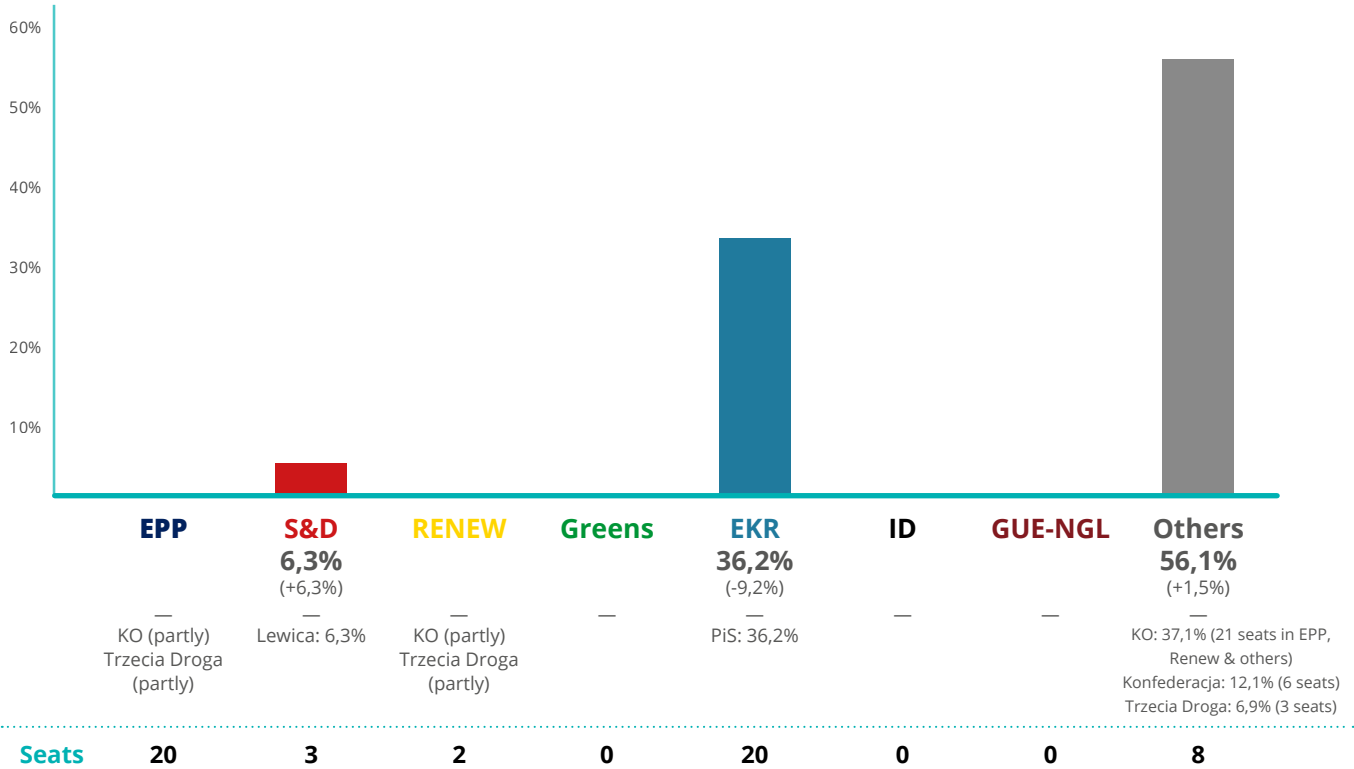


53 Seats

Threshold: 5%



41%



Largest Party

The Civic Coalition (KO) is an electoral alliance of left-liberal to liberal-conservative parties led by the Civic Platform (PO) under Prime Minister Donald Tusk (PO) and the strongest force in the Polish government coalition. Overall, it advocates stronger European cooperation and a constructive role for Poland.



Noteworthy Party

The national conservative party "Law and Justice" (PiS) continues to be led by Jarosław Kaczyński and previously belonged to the ECR group at European level. It is sceptical of the EU and deeper integration. In the election campaign, it stressed that Poland should not hand over its national sovereignty to the European institutions.

Lead candidates



Borys Budka
Civic coalition (KO)



Jacek Saryusz-Wolski
PiS



Michał Kobosko
Trzecia Droga



Key developments

Up to the end of 2023, the PiS government was in conflict with the EU over rule of law deficits, restrictions on media freedom and minority rights, as well as refugee policy. The main goal of the new coalition of liberal, left-wing and moderate parties under Prime Minister Tusk is to reverse the decay of democracy and strengthen rule of law. However, PiS remains the strongest force in parliament. Additionally, President Duda has a veto right that the coalition cannot override. The key question was who would succeed in mobilising their own supporters.

The Polish European election campaign was dominated by the issues of security and migration. There was particular focus on the tense security situation at the Polish-Belarusian border. Shaping the EU's future played a secondary role. The debate was overshadowed by national issues, with the European election resembling a continuation of the parliamentary election campaign and at the same time seen as a vote of confidence for the governing coalition.

Analysis

The EPP-led KO under Donald Tusk is ahead of PiS for the first time in ten years. It emphasised that Poland's security lies in close cooperation within Europe. On election night, Tusk explained that the good result for the KO puts it in a strong position in top-level European politics and within the EPP, which will be reflected in the filling of key EU positions. Tusk and the Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis will lead the EPP negotiations in the coming weeks. The EU-critical PiS party is one of the losers in the Polish European elections. Despite scandals and obvious internal party conflicts, the party is still almost on a par with KO. The right-wing extremist and anti-European Confederation achieved an unexpectedly good result, which is in line with the EU trend.

Overall, the pro-European camp in Poland continues to hold a clear majority. KO can claim a high profile as the strongest government party, which is happening at the expense of the two smaller coalition partners, the centrist Third Way and the Left. The results for the latter two parties were well below expectations. The election outcome could lead to personnel and substantive changes in the governing coalition.



Portugal

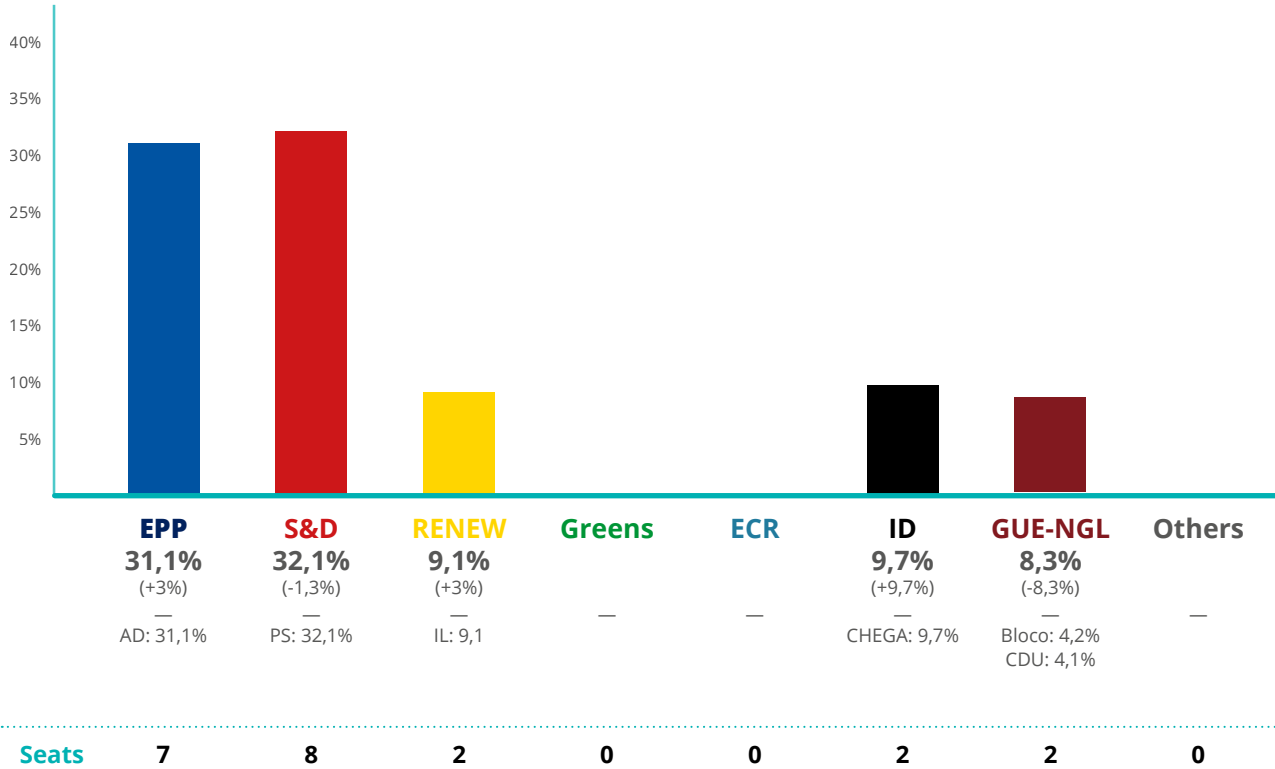


21 Seats

Threshold: 0%



37%



Largest Party

Partido Socialista (PS), which belongs to the S&D group, is surprisingly the strongest party, with a slight lead of less than one full percentage point over Aliança Democrática (AD). The focus of its EU election programme is on the EU as a union of values, a solidarity-based, green, social and digital EU, as well as increasing European competitiveness and its strategic autonomy.



Noteworthy Party

Aliança Democrática (AD) is a liberal to (liberal-)conservative alliance of the EPP parties PSD and CDS-PP. Although it had led in the polls, it narrowly missed the first place. Its EU election programme addressed the topics of “protection” (security, migration), “growth” (economy, agriculture), “welfare” (social dialogue, sustainability, health) and “feeling like a European”.

Lead candidates



Sebastião Bugalho
Aliança Democrática (AD)



Marta Temido
Partido Socialista (PS)



António Manuel Moreira Tanger Corrêa
CHEGA



Key developments

Since socialist Prime Minister António Costa (PS) resigned on 7 November 2023 due to accusations of corruption, investigations are still ongoing against confidants from his circle, although the allegations against him have not been substantiated. Aliança Democrática (AD) won the new elections with 80 seats, just ahead of the PS with 78 seats. The PS has had to put up with the minority government under Luís Montenegro (PSD) since 2 April 2024. The right-wing populist Chega party benefited most distinctly from the new elections (+38 seats). The concerning issues for voters include the housing shortage, the decline of the public health system, the inadequate education system and low per capita income.

Whether António Costa can return to a top position in the EU will only become clear after the election - but the PSD has already shown itself willing to negotiate in this regard. Although the content was dominated by national issues, EU enlargement, European defence policy and the Russian invasion of Ukraine were still being discussed at the beginning of the election campaign. Shortly before the elections, for example, the Socialists tabled a motion in the national parliament to reduce income taxes, which came about by way of a negative majority against the government. The state, financing and way of covering costs in the public health care system were also discussed again.

Analysis

Although voter turnout increased significantly compared to 2019, only a third of all those entitled actually exercised their vote. Aliança Democrática (PSD and CDS-PP), which has formed a minority government at national level since April with Luís Montenegro as prime minister, lost to the Socialists of Pedro Nuno Santos. Montenegro was therefore unable to capitalise on his office in any appreciable way. Despite 300,000 additional votes, the PSD and CDS together remained at seven seats, while the socialists won eight seats. However, they also lost one seat. Only the right-wing populist Chega party and the Liberal Initiative were able to increase their vote, with each winning two seats for the first time. Chega was disappointed with the result. The trend towards fragmentation of the Portuguese party landscape continued, with neither the PS nor the PSD able to generate stable absolute majorities. Prime Minister Luís Montenegro (Aliança Democrática) has already announced that he will support the candidacy of former Portuguese premier António Costa (Partido Socialista) for the office of President of the European Council if he was to run.



Romania

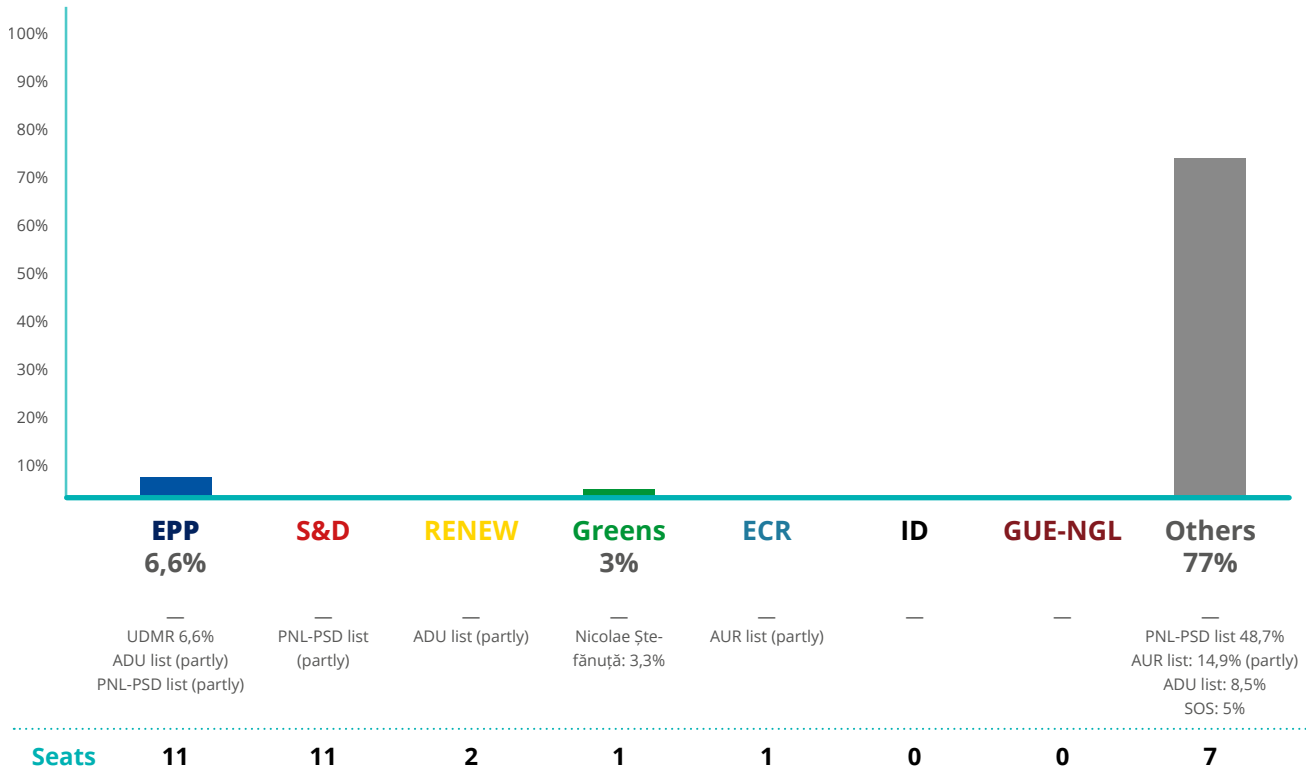


33 Seats

Threshold: 5%



52%



Largest Party

The communist successor party PSD came to terms with the new political system in the 1990s. Its power base is a network of “red barons” with close ties to the economy. The party is characterised by clientelism and corruption, even if the current chairman Marcel Ciolacu is trying to shake off this image. At EU level, the party belongs to the S&D group.



Noteworthy Party

The right-wing populist party SOS Romania became known when the flamboyant Senator Diana Sosoșoaca left the right-wing populist Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) and became the party’s chairwoman. SOS’s political style is characterised by shouting and conspiracy theories, with the party making it into the European Parliament for the first time in this election.

Lead candidates



Mihai Tudose
PNL-PSD list



Dan Barna
USR (ADU list)



Cristian Terheș
AUR list



Key developments

After the liberal-conservative government collapsed in autumn 2021, the national liberal EPP partner party PNL entered into a grand coalition with the social democratic PSD. Many PNL voters saw this step as a betrayal, as the PNL had for years made a name for itself as a force against the PSD, a party marked by corruption scandals. When the PSD and PNL announced that they would run on a single list for the European elections, many voters saw the political profile of the PNL merging further together with the PSD. In the short term, the PNL hopes that the alliance will give them more seats in the European Parliament than would be possible if they ran separately. In the medium and long term, however, this tactical consideration may become a problem for the PNL.

As a first consequence, the right-wing fringe of the political spectrum has already gained strength with the right-wing populist parties AUR and SOS Romania. In the 2024 European election campaign in Romania, European content and debates did not really feature. Local elections were organised at the same time as the European elections, with the former completely forcing European issues out of the public consciousness. The PSD-PNL electoral alliance relied on local faces, demotivation of new voters and "government stability". The major issues concerning defence (Ukraine), the shortage of skilled workers, the use of EU funds and the EU's energy and climate policy were thus not addressed.

Analysis

While the west of Europe appears shaken and migration policy is pushing many other important issues to the sidelines, Romania seems to be in a somewhat better position. Despite the apparent lack of a massive shift to the right in Romania, the country should not be portrayed as a shining example, however - appearances are deceptive: In Romania, the bar for democracy has been lowered at all political levels over the years, with half of those eligible to vote not doing so. In addition, past electoral reforms had a negative impact on these and, above all, the parallel local elections. A low level of political competition and a very superficial political debate are indicative of the weaknesses Romania's democracy needs to work on, with populism and clientelism becoming increasingly entrenched. Although the EPP party PNL is sending more members to the EU Parliament thanks to a joint electoral list with the Social Democrats, the costs of breaking away from the PSD for future elections is becoming ever higher. The basic attitude of mainstream politics and the population remains pro-European.



Slovakia

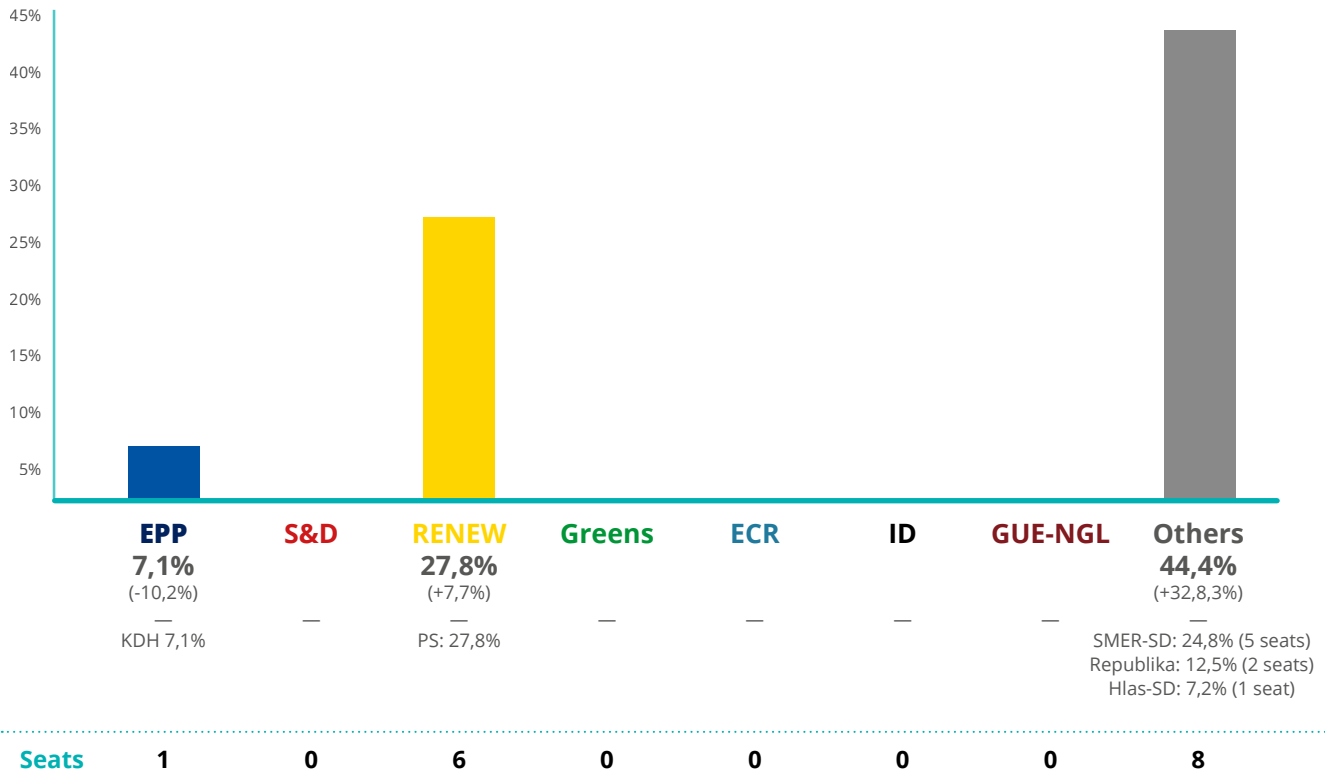


15 Seats

Threshold: 5%



34%



Largest Party

The liberal “Progressive Slovakia” party led by Michael Simecka (former Vice-President of the EP) is the strongest counterweight to Fico and appeals to the entire pro-European camp, even conservative and non-liberal voters. The opposition party, newly represented since the 2023 parliamentary elections, is the second strongest force after SMER.



Noteworthy Party

Robert Fico’s left-wing nationalist SMER (non-attached in the EP) is the strongest faction in Slovakia and is fighting with PS for the top spot in the EP polls. The party’s narrative “Only SMER can protect Slovakia against dominance from Brussels” ignores how much the country benefits from the EU and what it would look like without the EU.



Lead candidates



Monika Beňová

Smer-sociálna demokracia (SMER-SD)



Ľudovít Ódor

Progresívne Slovensko (PS)



Miriam Lexmann

Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie (KDH)



Key developments

Following the parliamentary and presidential elections, Slovakia is tired of elections and shocked by the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Fico. Although the division of society is palpably on the increase, at the same time there are no European issues with positive connotations: Migration, Green Deal and war appear to mobilise would-be voters in a negative manner. Fico's SMER party and the opposition Progressive Slovakia (PS) represent the two wings: "Defend national interests against Brussels" vs. "Europe as a guarantor of prosperity and security", thus reflecting what is being discussed in a heated and agitated manner within society. The shock of the assassination attempt on the Prime Minister has only had a limited impact: The government parties resumed the tough narrative almost immediately afterwards.

There is hardly any sign of the situation calming down, with many fearing that it will worsen further. The assassination attempt could give SMER a boost for the elections.

The election campaign projected domestic political divisions into the EU context: As much as the pro-European parties, especially the PS, portrayed Europe as a lifeline for the country ("We will keep Slovakia in Europe" and aimed at the Fico-Smer party "They must not get all the power!"), the governing SMER and Hlas parties underlined the intention that "Slovakia will become self-confident and independent" within the EU.

Analysis

The pro-European PS surprisingly won ahead of SMER, although SMER had used the situation to mobilise voters in the weeks since the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Fico. However, the highest voter turnout since joining the EU shows that the opposition can also mobilise voters. PS did well with good candidates, especially among younger voters. SMER used the continuous reporting on the assassination attempt to adopt an aggressive stance towards the "Western-influenced" opposition, the media and civil society. Somewhat surprisingly, SMER and Hlas, currently suspended from the Party of European Socialists, could only manage second place. The losers of the election are the HLAS parties (7%) of future President Peter Pellegrini and the EPP camp (15%), which split into several parties but only won one seat. Due to the 5% threshold rule in Slovakia, votes may have gone to the PS out of fear voting for parties below 5% could be less relevant, as in the past. The biggest loser is former Prime Minister and party leader Igor Matovic (Slovensko). As in the direct presidential elections, he got barely 2% of the votes.



Slovenia

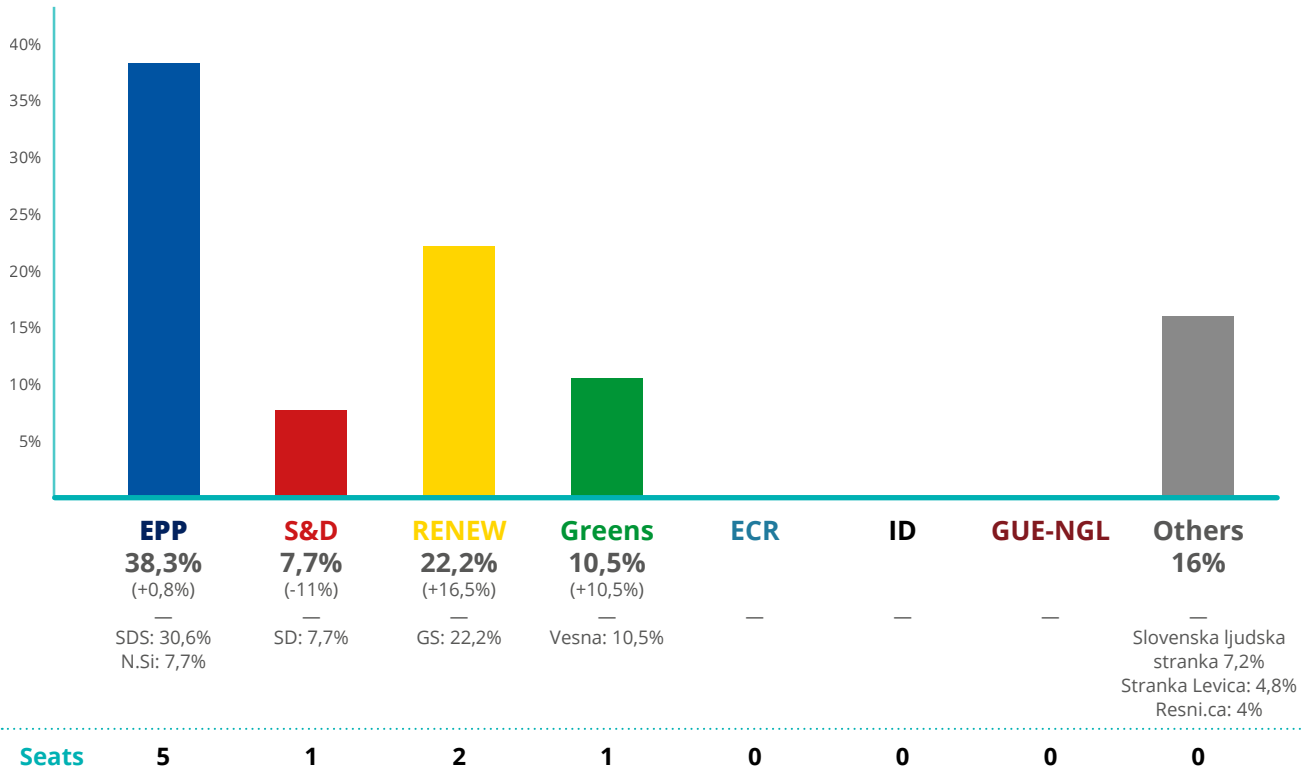


9 Seats

Threshold: 0%



41%



Largest Party

Founded in 1989, the “Slovenska demokratska stranka” (SDS) is a conservative/national conservative party belonging to the EPP at European level. In 2022, the party became the largest opposition party in Slovenia after previously being in government. The election campaign was led by MEP Romana Tomc.



Noteworthy Party

Gibanje-Svoboda (GS) is a social-liberal, pro-European party belonging to the Renew Group in the EU Parliament. Originally an environmental party (Z.DEJ), it has increasingly upheld liberal positions since 2022. Its Robert Golob is currently Slovenian Prime Minister, but it is in danger of being replaced by other left-wing and green parties.



Lead candidates



Romana Tomc

Slovenska demokratska stranka (SDS)



Irena Joveva

Gibanje Svoboda (GS)



Vladimir Prebilič

Vesna



Key developments

The distribution of the nine Slovenian seats in the European Parliament was decided on 9 June. Given the country's average voter turnout, around 60,000 votes are usually enough to win a seat. As the whole of Slovenia forms a single constituency, those candidates who are known nationwide have an advantage. In an attempt to increase voter turnout, the ruling coalition under the leadership of the "Svoboda Movement" decided to hold three referendums at the same time as the European elections: on legalising euthanasia, on preferential voting rights in elections and on the use of cannabis.

Before the election, it was expected that voter turnout would not increase in the centre-left spectrum but would increase in the centre-right. This expectation turned out to be correct. Alongside Europe-wide issues such as security and energy policy, inflation and the war in Ukraine, a number of domestic issues relating to the three referendums were mainstreamed. Much discussed even though the referendums were not binding, these concerned euthanasia, the use of cannabis and changes to the electoral system.

Analysis

As the ruling coalition decided to hold three referendums at the same time as the European elections, voter turnout increased by 12 percentage points, making these the most successful European elections for the country since its accession to the EU. Slovenian society became polarised during the course of the election, resulting in a political turnaround: the opposition parties, themselves EPP partner parties, won five of the nine Slovenian seats, making the EPP the clear winner of the EU elections. In particular, the centre-right SDS led by former Prime Minister Janez Jansa won four of five seats, thus stabilising its position and halting a negative trend. The fifth EPP seat went to the NSI, led by its Matej Tonin, which maintained its share of the vote. The ruling left-liberal Freedom Movement (GS) of Prime Minister Robert Golob won just two seats. As the third strongest party and at the expense of the SD, the Green Party also positioned itself in the European Parliament, with noticeably more votes than the SD. Each won one seat.



Spain

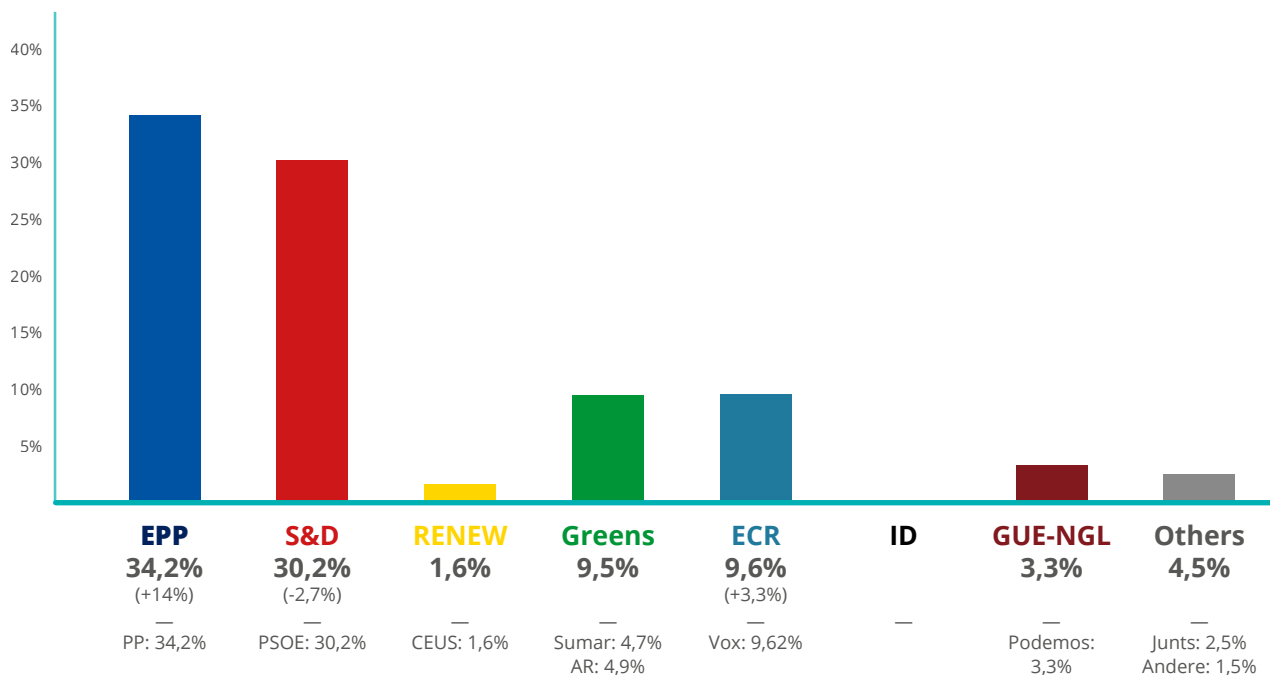


61 Seats

Threshold: 0%



49%



Seats 22 20 1 6 6 0 2 4



Largest Party

Although the "Partido Popular" (PP) is the largest party in the Spanish parliament, it belongs to the opposition. It is liberal-conservative, pro-European and a member of the EPP. In the European election campaign, it focused on such issues as equality before the law for all citizens, the promotion of economic growth, family and youth policy and the housing market.



Noteworthy Party

The Socialists (PSOE) form a minority government at national level in coalition with the far-left Sumar. A member of the S&D group, the party is socialist and pro-European. Prime Minister Sánchez is also president of the Socialist International. In the European election campaign, the party focused on industrial policy, workers' rights and the green transition.



Lead candidates



Dolors Montserrat
Partido Popular (PP)



Teresa Ribera
Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)



Jorgé Buxadé Villalba
Vox



Key developments

Spanish politics are characterised by the “wall” that Prime Minister Sánchez (PSOE) promised to erect against all parties not following the course of his fragile left to far-left (Sumar) minority government. Certain ministers are directing their rhetoric against the opposition, the media and the judiciary, thereby fuelling polarisation. Sánchez is dependent on the Catalan and Basque separatists, who are demanding further concessions. This is why he is pushing for the amnesty law for the separatists, which most experts consider unconstitutional and which Sánchez himself rejected during the election campaign. The recognition of Palestine and the calculated escalation with Argentinian President Milei are attempts to divert attention domestically from the fragmentation of his supporters and several corruption investigations against the PSOE.

In the run-up to the election, the focus was on national issues. The PP campaigned against the amnesty law for the Catalan separatists and focused on the judicial corruption investigations against Begoña Gómez, the wife of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. Sánchez mobilised his voters by portraying his wife as the innocent victim of a conspiracy by judges and the media. European topics were hardly discussed.

Analysis

Voter turnout was 11.5 percent lower than in 2019 when the European election was held together with local elections. Compared to 2014, however, it was almost 4.5% higher. The PP won more clearly than at any time since 1999, with a 4 percent lead over the PSOE. Alberto Núñez Feijóo (PP) thus doubled his lead over Pedro Sánchez compared to the national elections on 23 July 2023, when he had led by just under 350,000 votes. Thanks to its shift to the left, the PSOE was able to rein in voters from the regionalists as well as from the left-wing populist Podemos and far-left Sumar. The rift between Sumar and Podemos led to weak results for both. The national conservative Vox doubled its percentage result, albeit falling short of forecasts and winning just six seats. This was due to the new right-wing populist protest party “Se Acabó la Fiesta”, which emerged inter alia as a result of the corruption investigations into people close to Pedro Sánchez and which won 800,000 votes and three seats, to the detriment of Vox. Gaining just one seat, Puigdemont’s separatist ethnic-nationalist Junts collapsed, thereby weakening his position vis-à-vis Pedro Sánchez.



Sweden

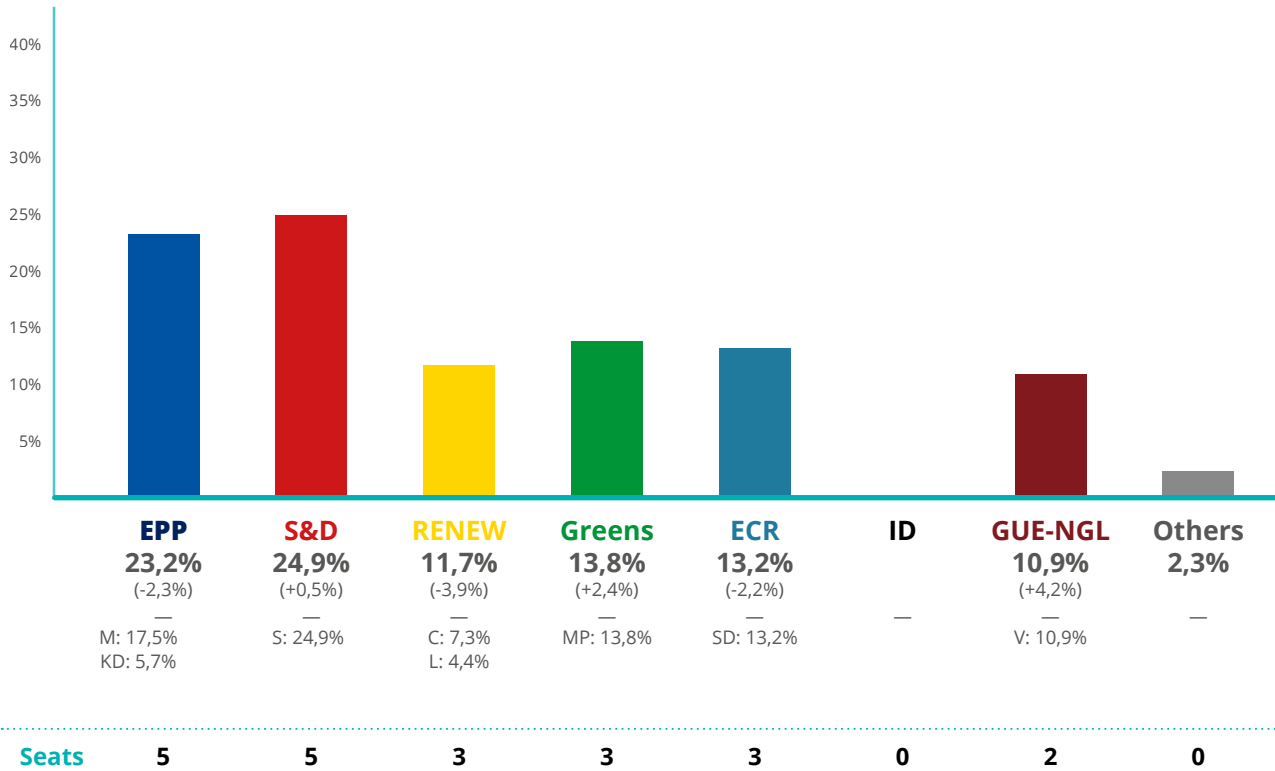


21 Seats

Threshold: 4%



51%



Socialdemokraterna

Largest Party

The Social Democrats, led by Magdalena Andersson, form the oldest party in Sweden, represent traditional social democratic values and are committed to social justice and the welfare state. Due to the majority held by the centre/right camp, they are currently in opposition - on European level they belong to the S&D.



Noteworthy Party

The Moderates represent conservative values, market economy policies and are committed to less state regulation. Since the last parliamentary elections, they have formed a minority government together with the Liberals and the Christian Democrats, supported by the Sweden Democrats. At European level, they are part of the EPP.

Lead candidates



Heléne Fritzon
Socialdemokraterna (S)



Tomas Tobé
Moderaterna (M)



Charlie Weimers
Sverigedemokraterna (SD)



Key developments

Traditionally, the Social Democrats are the strongest political force in Sweden. Nevertheless, after the last national parliamentary elections in 2022, this was not enough to continue the Social Democrat-led minority government. Given that a formal coalition with the right-wing nationalist Sweden Democrats was a definite no-no, this made the majority situation somewhat complicated. In the end, a conservative minority government under Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was formed by the Moderates together with the Christian Democrats and Liberals, which is supported by the Sweden Democrats in parliament.

External and internal security played a prominent role in the Swedish discourse before the elections, both in relation to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and gang crime in Swedish cities, which has increased hugely in recent years.

During the election campaign, the climate issue and the associated Green Deal was - as in the past - perceived as a core issue for Europe, as it can only be solved together with other countries. Although migration and borders likewise played an important role in the election campaign, it was also repeatedly emphasised that the EU stands for the individual freedom of EU citizens. The issue of security arose mainly in the area of foreign policy in the last few days before the election - especially with regard to the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Analysis

The voter turnout of just over 50% was somewhat lower than the 2019 figure of 55%. The Social Democrats, as the strongest party, and the Moderates, as the second strongest party, did not achieve an outstanding result, but a solid one. The Greens performed strongly, which is more of an exception across the EU. The party was particularly successful with its focus on climate change, which is seen as an important EU issue in Sweden. In the case of the three smaller parties, particularly the Liberals and the Christian Democrats, it was uncertain whether they would make it into the parliament. In fact, they won one seat each in the EU Parliament. The Sweden Democrats did not perform as well as expected, being clearly overtaken by the Moderates as the second strongest party after they were on level pegging for quite some time. It is the first time that the Sweden Democrats have lost support. This means that Sweden, like the other Nordic countries, is not following the trend of rising numbers of right-wing populists currently witnessed in a large number of EU Member States.

Remarks



Ranking of the level of voter turnout in the member states of the European Union

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Belgium 90 % ! | 15. Netherlands 46 % |
| 2. Luxembourg 82 % ! | 16. Slovenia 41 % |
| 3. Malta 73 % | 17. Greece 41 % ! |
| 4. Germany 65 % | 18. Poland 41 % |
| 5. Hungary 59 % | 19. Finland 40 % |
| 6. Cyprus 59 % | 20. Estonia 38 % |
| 7. Denmark 58 % | 21. Portugal 37 % |
| 8. Austria 56 % | 22. Czechia 36 % |
| 9. Romania 52 % | 23. Slovakia 34 % |
| 10. France 52 % | 24. Latvia 34 % |
| 11. Sweden 51 % | 25. Bulgaria 32 % ! |
| 12. Ireland 50 % | 26. Lithuania 28 % |
| 13. Spain 49 % | 27. Croatia 21 % |
| 14. Italy 48 % | |

! Countries with compulsory voting



The presentation of the political groups in the European Parliament and the allocation of the national parties corresponds to the status of the 2019-2024 legislative period. Percentage changes in individual groups are reflected as far as possible.

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