

Chapter One

Much ado about nothing?

The EP elections in comparative perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses the electoral results of the European Parliament (EP) Election of May 2019. We adopt a twofold strategy: first, we calculate the shares of votes for all the political parties that contested these elections and we then aggregate these results to the level of EP group. Thus, we simulate a single European constituency. This empirical choice aims at capturing the 2019 EP group performances over the EU as a whole, observing differences from the 2014 EP elections. By simulating this scenario, the objective is to understand the *real* electoral increases/decreases of each EP group, net of all those institutional settings (e.g., electoral rules in each member state, different distribution of seats across countries, etc.) which prime the mechanisms through which the new Parliament will be formed. Second, we analyse the new composition of the European Parliament in terms of seats. To the extent that analysis of the election outcome within a single European constituency clarifies the real dynamics of the rise and fall of European parties, this approach will enable us to assess the concrete relationships and potential equilibria that will be established within the EP.

ELECTORAL RESULTS IN A EUROPEAN CONSTITUENCY

Previous work has demonstrated a significant electoral volatility at European Parliament (EP) elections, largely taking the form of increasing fleeing of votes from parties belonging to the established EP groups, the PPE, S&D, ALDE, the Greens/EFA, towards anti-establishment and Eurosceptic parties (old ones as well as new), which are members of the ENF, EFDD, NGL-GUE and, partially, the ECR (Bosco and Werne 2012; Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Hooghe and Marks 2018; Morlino and Raniolo 2017). These trends may mirror not solely an electoral realignment, but also the emergence of new ideological foundations in political competition. According to Kriesi et al. (2006), globalization (or de-nationalization) has unleashed a new ideological division, pitching those supporting cultural liberalism (Cosmopolitans) versus those defending a national culture (Nationalists). This integration-nationalism ideological divide may transform the content of political competition, also including support/opposition for European integration as its fundamental component. The pro-

/-anti-European distinction may even, in 2019, have become pivotal in influencing inter-party contestation at the EP level. EP elections represent a good vantage point to assess electoral gains/losses of the Eurosceptic EP groups (the ENF, EFDD, NGL-GUE and ECR) vis-à-vis the Europhile ones (EPP, S&D, ALDE and the Greens/EFA), simulating a single European constituency.

Therefore, we identify a Pro-EU bloc, made up by EPP, S&D, ALDE, and the Greens/EFA. The S&D and EPP have historically represented two main groups, competing to gain the majority of seats in the European Parliament (EP) and crucial positions in the European Commission (EC). The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) mainly includes parties stemming from the Social Democratic, Socialist and Labour traditions, but it has recently comprised progressive parties partially unrelated with this party family, such as the Italian Democratic Party (Carriero 2014). On the contrary, the European People's Party (EPP) is a more complex coalition of parties. Indeed, the EPP had originally assembled parties of the Christian Democratic tradition, which have become a minority over time, while other conservative parties have been integrated within this group (Emanuele 2014). The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), though with an internal degree of heterogeneity, has sought to profile itself as the group of European liberals, merging the liberal-radical and liberal-conservative parties (Marks and Wilson 2000). The Greens/European Free Alliance was founded in 1999, gathering parties with ecologist and post-materialist platforms.

On the other hand, we also identify a Eurosceptic bloc, which has a more complex history. The Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL) originated in 1995, including many communist or neo-communist parties, but also more environmentalist and libertarian radical left parties. By contrast, right-wing Eurosceptic parties have often shifted from one EP group to another. The Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) had originally a preeminent position within the radical right camp, undergoing several splits (Maggini 2014). Indeed, some of these have joined the European Conservative Reformists (ECR), founded by the British Conservatives, has gathered significant governing and opposition right-wing parties but suffered from some relevant party defections towards a group favored by other eurosceptic parties who had formed the European for Nations and Freedom (ENF). This latter EP group has achieved the more successful strategy in terms of coalition-building, increasing the number of its member parties. Meantime, the EFDD is dominated by Farage's Brexit Party and the Italian Five Star Movement, generally lacking a widespread membership in the EU-28.

In Table 1 we report the electoral results for each political party in each country but identified by the name of the EP group to which that party belongs. We also show (in the row marked "Total") the percentage vote received by each EP group at the European level (evidently not the sum of national-level percentages, given the huge differences in the sizes of national electorates). We also report, for each country, variations in EP group electoral performance over the period 2014-2019, which are the differences between results achieved in 2019 compared to 2014 by the parties that were members of each EP group in each member state. When we average

this statistic across all EU member countries (bottom row of Table 1) we treat the outcome of the EP election in each country as equally important, no matter the size of that country's electorate. Thus, in what follows we refer both to the overall electoral results as calculated at the European level (totals row), and also at this mean of variations across EP groups, which gives us a view of the extent of common trends across countries.

Importantly, the average change across countries always has the same sign as the total change across countries (the EPP total vote share is less in 2019 than in 2014 and its variance across countries is also negative; the ALDE total in 2019 is greater than in 2014 and its variance is also positive – and the same for other party groups), so final outcomes in total votes are not aggregation artifacts. Trends across countries are meaningful.

Both measures of change reported at the bottom of Table 1 tells us that the two major EP groups in 2014, the EPP and S&D, both suffered from significant electoral losses across the majority of countries. On average, the EPP is the main loser of the 2019 EP elections, followed by the S&D. Overall, it is the other way around with the S&D being the main loser with the EPP ranked second. On average the EPP lost 2.8 percentage points as compared to 2014, whereas the S&D lost 1.5 percentage points; overall the losses with 3.2 and 6.8. Similarly, the EFDD, the ECR, and the GUE all suffered important electoral losses.

If the main EP groups can be identified as the losers of this election, the winners are the liberals of ALDE (they have gained, on average, 1 percentage point, an overall gain of 3.6), the Greens and, in particular, the ENF (which attained the highest growth rate both on average and overall, as compared to all the other EP groups). Note that overall gains/losses are always considerably greater than average gains/losses.

The remarkable electoral decline of the S&D is explained by the electoral collapse that the S&D parties underwent in the four largest EU member states. In fact, the Italian Democratic Party (PD), the British Labour, the German Social Democrats (SPD) and the French Socialists all experienced notable electoral losses. This voting trend is due to multifaceted domestic backgrounds, but it clearly weakens the position of this EP group. Once electorally hegemonic at the European level. S&D parties have lost significant share of votes in 17 out of 28 EU member states, across both Western and Eastern Europe. So the electoral losses have been widespread and generalized, unsettling the electoral primacy of the S&D in the entire continent. Though there are some significant success stories within this party family, such as the Portuguese, Spanish Socialists, the Danish Social Democrats and the Labour Party in the Netherlands, the EPP now electorally outweighs the S&D by 20.9 percent to 18.0 percent.

If Athens cries, Sparta does not laugh. This statement seems to synthesize the EPP electoral performances at the 2019 EP elections. It did not lose as much as the S&D but nevertheless lost 3.2 percentage points in the entire continent. This case also mirrors a substantial electoral decline in some of the major EU member states, such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain, which has dragged down its general performance. The less dramatic losses of the EPP are due to its electoral stability (or moderate growth) in many member states, such as Austria, Greece, Hungary, Ireland,

Table 1 - Electoral results by EP group and country. Cells report the percentage of votes calculated as the ratio of the aggregate of valid votes of parties belonging to each group and the total of valid votes cast in Europe

PARTY	EPP			S&D			ALDE			GREENS	
	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019
Austria	27	34.6	7.6	24.1	23.9	-0.2	8.1	8.4	0.3	14.5	14.1
Belgium	16.2	12.6	-3.6	18.3	16.2	-2.1	25.7	17.1	-8.5	14.6	15.1
Bulgaria	36.9	37.1	0.3	18.9	24.3	5.3	17.3	16.6	-0.7		
Croatia	41.4	22.7	-19	29.9	18.7	-11		9.2	9.2	9.4	1.8
Cyprus	37.7	29	-8.7	18.5	24.4	5.9					
Czechia	25.9	18.9	-7	14.2	4	-10	16.1	23.6	7.4		
Denmark	9.1	6.2	-3	19.1	31.6	12.4	23.2	23.5	0.3	11	13.2
Estonia	13.9	10.5	-3.4	13.6	23.7	10.2	46.7	41.4	-5.3	13.2	1.8
Finland	27.8	25.7	-2.2	12.3	14.6	2.3	26.4	19.9	-6.5	9.3	16
France	20.8	8.5	-12	14	6.2	-7.8	9.9	24.9	15	8.9	13.5
Germany	34.5	28.9	-6.5	27.3	15.8	-11	4.8	7.6	2.8	12.8	21.5
Greece	22.7	33.1	10.4	15.8	9.2	-6.6	0.9	1.5	0.5	1	0.9
Hungary	51.6	52.6	1.1	20.6	22.7	2		9.9	9.9	12.3	2.2
Ireland	22.3	29.6	7.3	5.3	3.1	-2.2	22.3	16.5	-5.8	4.9	11.4
Italy	21.7	9.3	-12	40.8	22.7	-18	1.4	3.1	1.7	0.9	2.3
Latvia	46.6	26.4	-20	13.5	17.8	4.3	2.1	5.4	3.2	6.4	6.3
Lithuania	17.4	19.7	2.3	17.3	15.9	-1.4	30.8	15.6	-15	10.2	14.8
Luxembourg	37.7	21.1	-17	11.7	12.2	0.5	14.8	21.4	6.7	15	18.9
Malta	40	37.9	-2.1	53.4	54.3	0.9		2	2	2.9	0.7
Netherlands	15.2	12.2	-3	9.4	19	9.6	27.5	21.7	-5.8	7.2	11.1
Poland	38.9	38.5	-0.5	9.4	6.1	-3.4				0.3	
Portugal	30	30.2	0.3	34	35.9	1.9	8.5	2.6	-5.9	4.2	7.4
Romania	24.7	38	13.3	37.6	25.7	-12	21.8	26.5	4.6		
Slovakia	33.3	37.4	4	24.1	15.7	-8.4	6.7		-6.7	0.5	0.8
Slovenia	41.4	37.5	-3.9	8.1	18.7	10.6	9.3	26.9	17.6	11.2	3.7
Spain	26.7	20.3	-6.4	23.5	33.2	9.6	15.4	15.1	-0.3	6.1	5.8
Sweden	24.4	25.5	1.1	36.9	24.3	-13	20.4	14.9	-5.5	19.2	11.5
UK	0.2	3.3	3.2	24.4	13.6	-11	6.9	20.2	13.3	10.1	16.5
Total	24.1	20.9	-3.2	24.8	18	-6.8	9.2	12.8	3.6	7.4	10.2
Mean var.			-2.8			-1.5			1		

Sources: Official national offices.

	GUE			ECR			EFDD			ENF			
	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.
	-0.4										19.7	17.2	-2.5
	0.5	3.4	8.4	5	16.1	14.2	-1.9				4.1	12	7.9
					10.7	7.4	-3.3					3.6	3.6
	-7.6					8.5	8.5		5.7	5.7			
		27	27.5	0.5									
		11	6.9	-4	7.7	14.5	6.9	5.2		-5.2		9.1	9.1
	2.3	8.1	9.2	1.1	26.6		-27					10.8	10.8
	-11										4	13	8.9
	6.7	9.3	6.9	-2.4	12.9		-13					13.8	13.8
	4.5	6.6	6.3	-0.3	3.8		-3.8				24.9	23.3	-1.5
	8.7	8.6	5.5	-3.1	7.7		-7.7					11	11
	-0.1	26.6	23.8	-2.8	3.5	0.8	-2.7	2.7		-2.7		0.7	0.7
	-10												
	6.5	22.8	34.8	12									
	1.4	4		-4	3.7	6.5	2.8	21.2	17.1	-4.1	6.2	34.3	28.2
	-0.1				14.4	16.5	2.1	8.3		-8.3			
	4.7				8.1	5.5	-2.5	14.3	2.7	-12			
	3.9		4.8	4.8	7.5	10	2.5						
	-2.2				0.4	0.5	0.1					0.3	0.3
	3.9	13.8	7.4	-6.5	7.7	17.8	10.1	0.5		-0.5	13.3	3.5	-9.8
	-0.3				35.8	45.4	9.6		4.6	4.6	7.2	0.1	-7.1
	3.2	18.6	18	-0.7									
						3.2	3.2						
	0.3		0.6	0.6	14.3	14.9	0.6	3.6	4.1	0.5	17.5	3.2	-14.3
	-7.4	5.5	6.3	0.9								1.7	1.7
	-0.3	21.7	11.5	-10									
	-7.6	7.8	6.8	-1		15.3	15.3	12		-12			
	6.3	1.1	0.9	-0.2	23.9	9.1	-15	26.6	30.5	3.9		3.2	3.2
	2.8	7.7	5.4	-2.4	8.3	6.8	-1.5	6.7	55.3	-1.4	5.2	11	5.8
	-0.4						-0.5			-1.1			2.3

Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. Nevertheless, and despite losses in 15 out of 28 EU member states, the EPP vote remains fairly uniformly distributed across the continent, with this EP Group being still electorally entrenched in many important Southern, Western and Eastern countries.

It is worth noting that the EPP and S&D total sum of votes decreased from 48.9% (2014) to 38.9% (2019), indicating a sizeable and rapid electoral downturn of the two main pro-EU EP groups, presaging many coalition-making dilemmas in the EP and Commission (EC). However, these electoral losses have been partially compensated by the increase of the votes achieved by the ALDE and Greens-EFA. These two EP groups embody different ideological traditions as compared to the EPP and S&D, but clearly belonging to the pro-EU pole. In 2019, the ALDE gains 2.8 percentage points, reaching an overall share of 12.8%. This result is mainly due to the voting boost achieved by the French *The Republic on the Move* (EM) and the British Liberal Democrats. ALDE parties also obtained good performances in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. Though the electoral growth of the ALDE parties appears to be indisputable, there are some elements of weaknesses linked to its overall result. In fact, the uncertainty of the UK membership, with the Liberal Democrats probably leaving the group with the rest of British MEPs, and the peculiar nature of the EM, depending so much on Emmanuel Macron's personal fortunes, leaves some questions regarding the future of this EP group, which has obtained an important, but perhaps ephemeral, result.

On the contrary, the Greens-EFA electoral growth (+2.8 percentage points) presents different characteristics, outlining a well-defined electoral pattern. Indeed, these parties have gained significant shares of votes in the West and, in particular, in North European countries, such as Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK. This result is certainly unsurprising, because of the geographic bias of the Post-Materialistic cleavage (Inglehart 1976), which has historically set up a favourable window of opportunity for this party family in North-Western European democracies. Though the Greens-EFA parties have reinforced their position in the in West European left camp, they are still electorally marginal in Southern and Eastern European democracies. This geographical unbalance in the electoral fortunes of the Greens also explains the discrepancies between their electoral performance calculated on the whole European constituency (+2.8) and their electoral performance assessed in terms of average variation across countries between 2014 and 2019 (+0.2). Moreover, it is worth noting that the second-order nature of the EP elections has always rewarded these parties in Western Europe, with the EP electorate being less constrained by strategic motivations.

The Eurosceptic EP groups were widely expected to make major breakthroughs at this EP elections. Instead, these groups have had only a limited electoral success, undergoing (as we shall see) a redistribution of votes and seats among themselves. In fact, three out of four of the Eurosceptic groups have lost remarkable shares of votes. First and foremost, the radical left parties of the GUE-NGL have suffered a notable setback, losing ground in their South-Western strongholds (especially Greece, France and Spain). These parties appeared to present a successful challenge to

the austerity policies and the neo-liberal bias of the EU at the 2014 EP elections. Indeed, the parties belonging to the GUE-NGL became central actors in many national party systems. Nowadays, this so-called anti-austerity bloc is electorally stagnating, weakening its presence almost everywhere. Meantime, the EFDD has lost 1.4 percentage points, suffering from the electoral defeat of one of its major members, the M5S in Italy. Though Nigel Farage's Brexit Party has enhanced its votes as compared to the UKIP in 2014, which was the leading party of this EP group, the EFDD overall performance has lagged behind in 2019.

The ECR has also decreased its share of votes, losing 1.8 percentage points. This electoral defeat has mainly to do with its lack of coalition-building capacity. In fact, this EP group has suffered from many significant defections, with AFD (Germany), DF (Denmark) and True Finns (Finland) moving towards the ENF. This shift of parties largely explains the ECR voting losses, which has also been accompanied by the collapse of the British Conservative party. The political and electoral crisis of the Tories, plus the outcome of the so-called Brexit referendum, may have minimised the ECR appeal for other Eurosceptic parties. Nevertheless, the ECR has managed to increase its share of votes in some national contexts, such as Croatia, the Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden. While the ECR coalition-building strategy has been flawed, the ENF has been able to become more inclusive over time. We may hypothesize that the Italian Lega entrepreneurial efforts have brought substantial payoffs, with this governing party being committed to securing the adherence to this group of new and old parties. Unmistakably, the ENF is one of the success stories of these EP elections, gaining 5.8 percentage points and becoming the fourth electoral EP group. Apart from its coalition-building strategy, many important results have been obtained by its traditional members (FPO, LEGA, FN, VB, etc.), with the notable exception of the Dutch PVV. Nonetheless, the ENF's relative electoral breakthrough has appeared to occur under the form of a voting redistribution with the other right-wing Eurosceptic groups, which do not allow us to recognize a proper electoral realignment.

All things considered, despite the gains and losses summarized above, by scrutinising the overall percentages of the pro-EU parties and the anti-EU ones we may identify some kind of stability in the balance of power within the continent. The pro-EU camp has decreased its vote share by 3.9 percentage points. This bloc is certainly more fragmented as compared to 2014 EP elections, with losses of votes by its two major components (EPP and S&D) being moderately offset by the performance of the two minor ones (Greens-EFA and ALDE). This is a pattern of electoral stability with fragmentation, which clearly summarizes the pro-EU parties' trajectory in the 2019 EP elections. Meantime, the Eurosceptic bloc has not boosted its overall voting score, gaining only 0.5 percentage points. However, the ENF is clearly taking on a hegemonic role within this camp, increasing votes and perhaps its blackmail power within the EP. It is worth noting that the ENF may present a more concrete challenge towards the pro-EU parties, because of its capacity to reduce the fragmentation of the Eurosceptic formations in the EP. In a nutshell, the shift of the absolute votes would draw a pattern of electoral stability, and in spite of some concerns concerning the EU's destiny, it is a "*much ado about nothing*" scenario.

SEATS FOR THE EP GROUPS

The electoral results of the main European groups at the EU level do not reveal the real balance of power within the new European Parliament. Its composition in fact derives from the diversified electoral mechanisms within the Union, the different allocations of seats between member states, as well as the different electoral dynamics within each member state. After all, we are talking about 28 different elections, reflecting very diverse internal scenarios, and electing a different number of representatives in the EP. Even at a first glance, it is clear how the electoral results calculated on a European basis are not perfectly reproduced in the distribution of seats across the various groups, which compose the European Parliament (Table 2). And it is equally clear (as we shall see) that a distribution of seats based on the EU-wide result would have returned an even more fragmented Parliament than the one that will actually take its seats in the coming weeks.

Therefore, it is now time to delve into the real composition of the new European Parliament, analyzing the new equilibria and the strategic options for the several key players in town, in light of the next crucial steps to be taken regarding the appointments of key figures of the Union (i.e. the President of the Commission, the President of the European Parliament and the President of the Council).

As we have seen, the losers of these elections are the parties linked to the EPP and S&D groups, the parliamentary groups that in past EP legislative sessions held together a majority within the EP. Contrary to what we saw in terms of electoral results on an European constituency (Table 1), the Populists (EPP) are the big losers in terms of seats (Table 2). Overall, compared to 2014, they lost 41 seats, down to 333. The loss is not localized but spans across different geographical areas in a rather homogeneous way, just as did the loss of votes. In Northern European countries and in Eastern European countries they lose 14 seats, whereas 13 are the seats lost in countries of the Mediterranean area. In general, compared to the 2014 elections, in only 6 countries out of 28 do the Populists improve their position in the new EP – a worse result than in terms of votes, where they lost ground in 11 out of 28 countries.

The S&D lose 38 seats compared to 2014, and now get 153 seats. Not differently from what we observed for the EPP, losses are widespread in many EU countries, particularly in Northern Europe and Southern Europe. Nevertheless, the most notable drop was recorded in Northern countries: 29 seats have been lost, an even greater loss than that recorded for the Populists in the same geographical area. The defeat in Southern European countries was more contained. Here the sharp decline of the Italian S&D representation (-12 seats) was partly dampened by the growth of the Social Democrats in Spain (+ 6 seats) and, to a lesser extent, in Portugal (+ 1 seat). Finally, the losses of the Social Democrats in Eastern Europe are minimal (-3 seats compared to 2014).

Just as we saw in terms of votes, together with the Greens and the members of the ENF group, the Liberals of the ALDE are the winners of these elections in terms of seats. Taking advantage of the crisis of the traditional parties, which are mostly linked to the two historical groups of the EPP and the S&D, liberal forces

have been able to gather wide support in the 2019 elections. The figures are remarkable in Northern Europe, where the success of the ALDE has been impressive. The group moved from 38 to 70 seats, with an increase of 32 seats in total. The parties which are included in the ALDE group obtained a good result also in Eastern Europe: here 10 more seats have been gained as compared to 2014, thus moving from 19 to 29 MEPs.

The group of the Greens strengthens its presence in the European Parliament, winning 73 seats, 23 more than in 2014. The '*Green wave*' that in the chronicles seems to have crossed the Old Continent, is however geographically localized, exclusively involving the countries of Northern Europe. Except in Sweden and Austria, where the parties linked to this Eurogroup lose 2 and 1 seats respectively, the Greens visibly gained support everywhere in Northern Europe. Overall, in Northern Europe the number of seats assigned to the Greens grew by 24 units, an increase that is second only to that of those parties which are linked to the ALDE. In Southern Europe and in Eastern Europe, the Greens representation, already meagre in 2014, remains substantially stable. Of the 4 seats occupied in 2014, all are reconfirmed in 2019, with the decisive contribution of Spain and Portugal, the only two countries in the area able to elect Green MEPs. The situation remains substantially unchanged, compared to 2014, also in Eastern Europe, where the number of seats for the Greens, already small in 2014, falls by one unit.

Apart from mainstream groups, significant losses are recorded both in the radical-left group GUE and in the right-wing groups ECR and EFDD. For GUE, the number of seats goes from 52 to 39, with a generalized drop throughout the continent and a prevalence of losses in Southern Europe. For the EFDD group, the loss was 5 seats in a rather homogeneous way throughout the continent. The only exception is in fact the United Kingdom, where the parties linked to the group still managed to obtain 5 more seats than in 2014 (and this is the figure that returns an overall positive balance between 2019 and 2014 in Northern Europe). Even the ECR, taken as a whole, loses seats (-11 seats compared to the 2014 elections), but in this case it is a geographically localized loss that mainly involves the countries of Northern Europe. By contrast, a positive balance clearly emerges in Eastern Europe and, to some extent, in Southern Europe.

Compared to the forecast on the eve of the election, the advance of right-wing groups with a strong Eurocritical or even Eurosceptic connotation has been rather limited, although still relevant. The EFDD and ENF groups together reach 115 seats, 26 more than in 2014. If we add the seats of the ECR group, where there are also some parties that are rather critical towards the EU (Fratelli d'Italia in Italy, for example), the right-wing pole of the new EP will be able to count on 174 seats, far from the majority of seats and, more importantly, far from being able to become a key player in the formation of a new majority. For these groups, the only larger parliamentary group with which there is the possibility of dialogue is in fact the EPP, but even by adding the total number of seats obtained by the Populists with those of the right-wing groups, the coalition would not reach the 376 seats that are necessary to have a majority in Parliament. In addition to the scarcity of numbers, there exist deep di-

Table 2 - Seats distribution in the new European Parliament by country, EP group, and regional area.
Green colours indicate gains; red colours indicate losses

PARTY	EPP			S&D			ALDE			GREENS	
	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019
Northern Europe											
Finland	3	3		2	2		4	3	-1	1	2
Sweden	4	6	+2	6	5	-1	3	3		4	2
Ireland	4	5	+1	1		-1	1	1			1
UK				20	10	-10	1	17	+16	6	11
Austria	5	7	+2	5	5		1	1		3	2
Belgium	4	4		4	3	-1	6	4	-2	2	3
Denmark	1	1		3	3		3	5	+2	1	2
Germany	34	29	-5	27	16	-11	4	7	+3	13	24
Luxembourg	3	2	-1	1	1		1	2	+1	1	1
Netherlands	5	4	-1	3	6	+3	7	6	-1	2	3
France	20	8	-12	13	5	-8	7	21	+14	6	12
Total	83	69	-14	85	56	-29	38	70	+32	39	63
Southern Europe											
Cyprus	2	2		2	2						
Greece	5	8	+3	4	2	-2					
Italy	17	7	-10	31	19	-12					
Malta	3	2	-1	3	4	+1					
Portugal	7	7		8	9	+1	2		-2		1
Spain	17	12	-5	14	20	+6	8	8		4	3
Total	51	38	-13	62	56	-6	10	8	-2	4	4
Central Eastern Europe											
Bulgaria	7	7		4	5	+1	4	3	-1		
Croatia	5	4	-1	2	3	+1	2	1	-1	1	
Czech Republic	7	5	-2	4		-4	4	6	+2		3
Estonia	1		-1	1	2	+1	3	3		1	
Hungary	12	13	+1	4	5	+1		2	+2	2	
Latvia	4	2	-2	1	2	+1				1	1
Lithuania	2	3	+1	2	2		3	2	-1	1	2
Poland	23	17	-6	5	8	+3					
Slovenia	5	4	-1	1	2	+1	1	2	+1	1	
Slovakia	6	4	-2	4	3	-1	1	2	+1		
Romania	15	14	-1	16	9	-7	1	8	+7		
Total	87	73	-14	44	41	-3	19	29	+10	7	6
Total - EU	221	180	-41	191	153	-38	67	107	+40	50	73

Source: EP Parliament

	GUE			ECR			EFDD			ENF		
Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.	2014	2019	Var.
+I	2	2		2		-2					2	+2
-2	I	I			3	+3	2		-2			
+I	4	3	-I	I	I		-I					
+5	I	I		20	4	-16	24	19	+5			
-I										4	3	-I
+I		I	+I	4	3	-I				I	3	+2
+I	I	I		4		-4					I	+I
+II	8	5	-3	8		-8					II	+II
+I	3	I	-2	2	5	+3				4		-4
+6	4	6	+2				I		-I	23	22	-I
+24	23	20	-3	4I	15	-26	27	29	+2	32	42	+10
	2	2										
	6	6		I		-I						
	3		-3		5	+5	17	14	-3	5	28	+23
+I	4	4										
-I	II	6	-5									
	26	18	-8	I	5	+4	17	14	-3	5	28	+23
				2	2							
-I				I	I							
+3	3	I	-2	2	4	+2	I		-I		2	+2
-I												
-2												
				I	2	+I	I		-I			
+I				I	I		2		-2			
				19	26	+7				4		-4
-I												
				2	2							
					I	+I						
-I	3	I	-2	28	39	+II	4		-4	4	2	-2
+23	52	39	-13	70	59	-II	48	43	-5	4I	72	+3I

visions within the European right. Although some members of the EPP have called for a new dialogue between centre-right and right-wing parties, this road seems to be all uphill, primarily because this position is in fact a minority one within the EPP. Moreover, even for the supporters of a dialogue with more Eurosceptic parties, this strategy should involve only those parties which are most open to negotiation – which would probably exclude, for example, the MEPs of the Brexit Party. At the same time, an EPP shifting towards the right would definitively break the alliance with the S&D and, most importantly in an EP that is for sure more fragmented than in the past, with the Liberals of the ALDE who, at this point, seem to hold a critical position for the formation of a majority in Parliament.

If it is true that the 2019 elections will not be remembered as a success for Eurosceptic parties, it is equally true that the traditional groups of the centre-right and centre-left have lost their centrality within the Parliament. The EPP and the S&D together do not reach the 376 seats that are necessary to have a majority and, as a consequence, the coalition that was majoritarian in the previous legislature will necessarily move towards the centre. The most plausible hypothesis is that of a coalition with the centrist forces of the ALDE, which already in the previous legislature repeatedly supported proposals of the PPE-S&D coalition. It is also the only realistic possibility for the formation of a rather cohesive majority. Indeed, the other possibility for the PPE-S&D would be that of including the Greens in the coalition. However, the main Greens component from Germany seems not to be willing to negotiate on crucial matters such as environmentalism and socio-economic issues. Also, given the strong socialist inspiration of the group, its entry into the coalition would skew the balance of power between the EPP and the S&D excessively, an eventuality that seems not to be plausible in the immediate future, given that the EPP still remains the largest group in the Parliament.

In the coming weeks the picture will become clearer. The appointments of the President of the Commission, the President of the Parliament and the President of the Council will be a test for the new parliamentary arrangements. Until the end of the previous legislature, these offices were owned by the groups most represented in the EP. This time, however, in addition to the EPP and the S&D, there will be another player, and it is to be expected that compromise will be more difficult than in the past. These difficulties might emerge quite soon in the process of selecting the new President of the Commission. Usually, the President of the European Commission is selected by the most representative group within the Parliament. However, the inclusion of the ALDE in the EPP-S&D coalition might generate internal conflicts within the coalition itself. The *Spitzenkandidat* of the Populists is in fact Manfred Weber, a long-standing MEP, elected from the CSU in Germany, whose candidacy is strongly opposed by the Liberals (including Emmanuel Macron). Whether this will lead to an early deterioration of the internal relationships is still to be seen. However, it seems clear that, in a fragmented parliament, the most moderate groups will retain a predominant position.

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