

26 May 2014

European Parliament Elections: Outcome delivers uncertainty

We refer to [ECSLA-NAC 04/14](#)

The European Parliament elections are over and the results – even if still not definitive yet – deliver an outcome which was expected only up to a certain extent. The EPP group which is formed out of Europe’s conservative parties will remain the biggest group in the new Parliament with 213 deputies. This is a loss of 61 seats compared to the previous legislature. The Socialist party with their “Spitzenkandidat” **Martin Schultz** sees a much smaller decrease from 196 seats to 190.

Also the Liberals of the ALDE group saw a reduction in numbers: from 83 to 64, partially because of the big losses suffered by the British Liberal Democrats and the equally poor performance of the German FDP who loses 9 seats and will send only 3 deputies to Brussels and Strasbourg. The Greens consolidate their position in the European Parliament landscape with 53 MEPs, only 4 seats less than the previous legislature. Worth mentioning is also the unprecedented victory of the Eurosceptic United Kingdom Independence Party – Ukip which is the big winner in the UK and the right wing Front National who emerges from this elections as the biggest party in France and will send 24 deputies to the new Parliament.

What does all of this mean for the future?

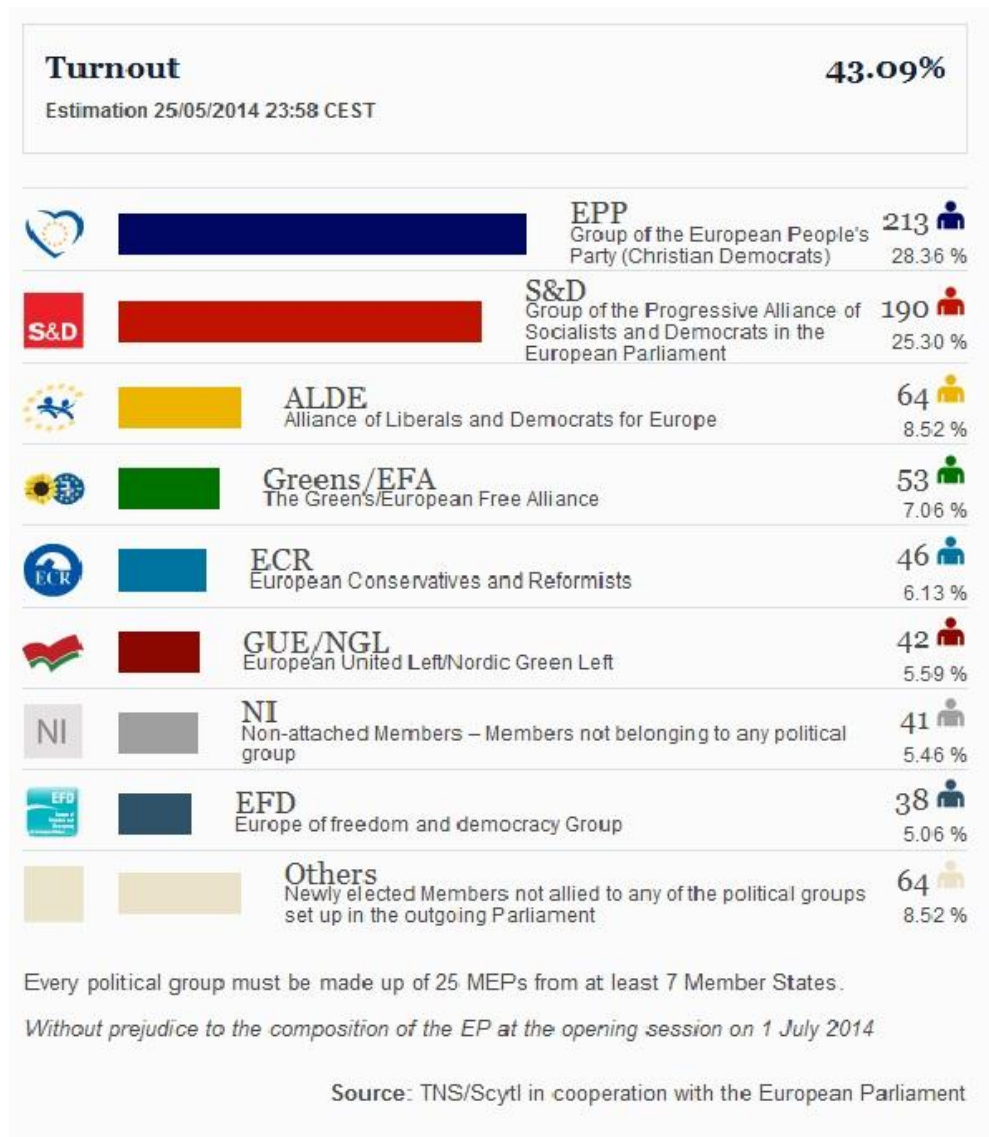
Eurosceptic parties such as the French Front National and the British UKip surely can celebrate a victory like never before. Provisional results indicate that there will be at least **110 Eurosceptic** MEPs (Member of European Parliament) in the new Parliament. However, pro-European parties such as the EPP, S&D, ALDE and the Greens have still a majority and while the battle for single dossiers will be more complicated, policy-making during the next mandate will likely be **unchanged**, meaning that laws will get passed and opposition forces will not have the numbers to obstruct the legislative agenda.

The other side of the coin

Newly elected MEPs who don’t belong to any political group, like the new deputies from the Front National, will try to form a new political group hoping to gain more influence in the political landscape. Currently there are at least 67 new MEPs who do not belong to any pre-existing political group. It is unknown how these new forces from the far left and from the far right will be able to influence the policy agenda in the future. To learn more about the formation of political groups, please visit this [link](#).

Currently it looks like most future initiatives will have to be passed by a “*grand coalition*” made up of the S&D and EPP groups. A first test for the new Parliament will be the election of the new

President of the European Commission. Policy watchers in Brussels expect the final candidate to be the “product” of complex negotiations between the political groups. At this time, it seems unlikely that either the S&D candidate **Martin Schultz** or EPP’s **Jean-Claude Juncker** will be the candidate to become the new President of the European Commission. Latest news reveal that Danish Prime Minister **Helle Thorning-Schmidt** might step up as a good compromise candidate. In fact, as a Social Democrat she would easily find the support of the S&D and as a Scandinavian of a non-Euro country she could manage to get the patronage of the European Conservatives and Democrats group, as well as the Greens and the far left GUE/NGL. But, at the same time, exactly the same arguments could be used against her as a compromise candidate. Although the elections to the European Parliament are over, major decisions lie ahead.



The new Parliament has 751 seats; therefore a simple majority of 375 is needed in order to pass any resolution.

Next Steps

- Political groups will now meet in Brussels on the 2nd of June to start the negotiations. It will be up to the Member States to propose a candidate for the European Commission on 26-27 June. The European Parliament is expected to endorse the new President around the 14-17 July.

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