

NEWS FROM THE EU

ELECTION SPECIAL

(En)



EUROPEAN ELECTION 2024

VON DER LEYEN COULD STAY ON FOR A SECOND TERM AS FAR RIGHT SURGES LESS THAN EXPECTED

By **Arturo Encinar**

Last week, between the 6th and 9th of June, citizens of the EU went to the polls to elect their representatives in the European Parliament for the tenth time since the first direct election in 1979, and the first one without the participation of the United Kingdom.

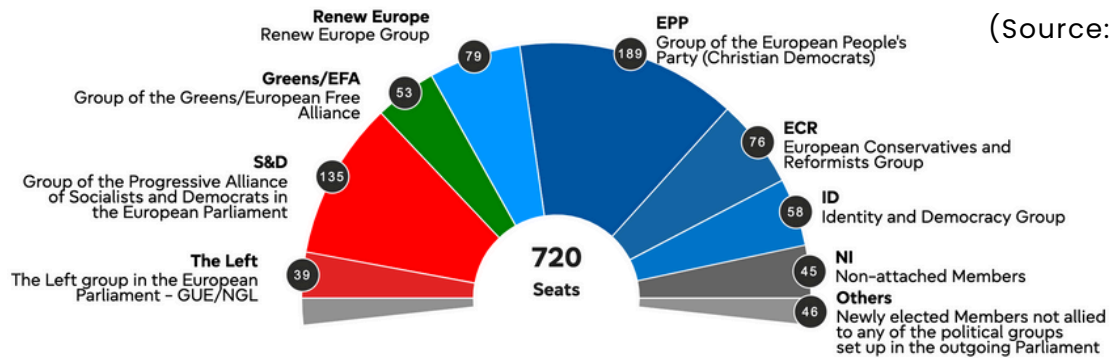
The European People's Party (EPP) of Ursula von der Leyen will remain the biggest group in the Parliament with 189 seats and 21% of the popular vote. Followed by the Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) with 148 seats and the centrist Renew Europe, that lost 30% of their representatives and obtained 79 MEPs.

This means that the big centrist coalition of conservatives, socialists and liberals that has dominated EU politics for decades will be able to form the new European Commission (likely led by Ursula von der Leyen), as they have retained the absolute majority of the chamber.

The far-right has surged, but not to the extent that some polls showed and the two political groups in which it is divided (Georgia Meloni's ECR and Marine Le Pen's ID) will not have the key to the next EU Commission. On the far-left, both the European Green Party and the group of The Left have experienced losses.

BREAKING DOWN THE RESULTS

Composition of the new European Parliament (Source: EU)



European People's Party

Centre-right

190 seats (+3)

26,25% (+2,02%)

Leader **Largest party**

Ursula von der Leyen (GER)

Christian Democratic Union (GER)

Socialists and Democrats

Centre-left

135 seats (-19)

18,75% (+2,84%)

Leader **Largest party**

Nicolas Schmit (LUX)

Partito Democratico (ITA)

Renew Europe

Centre

79 seats (-29)

10,97% (-3,61%)

Leader **Largest party**

Valérie Hayer (FRA)

Renaissance (FRA)

Conservatives and Reformists

Right

73 seats (+11)

10,14% (+1,88%)

Leader **Largest party**

Ryszard Legutko (POL)

Fratelli d'Italia (ITA)

Identity and Democracy

Far-right

58 seats (-15)

8,06% (-1,66%)

Leader **Largest party**

Anders Vistisen (DEN)

Rassemblement Nationale (FRA)

The Greens - EFA

Left

53 seats (-21)

7,36% (-2,49%)

Leader **Largest party**

Bas Eickhout (NED)

Die Grünen (GER)

The Left

Far-left

36 seats (-5)

5,00% (-0,36%)

Leader **Largest party**

Walter Baier (AUT)

La France Insoumise (FRA)

NI

Non-Inscrits

Diverse

45 seats (-12)

6,25% (-1,34%)

Leader **Largest party**

None

Alternative für Deutschland (GER)

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE COUNTRIES OF OUR VOLUNTEERS?

FRANCE

Marine Le Pen's *Rassemblement National* stunned with a landslide victory, obtaining 30 seats and 31% of the popular vote. Far behind, the list backed by the *majorité présidentielle* lost 10 seats and finished second with 13 MEPs, tying with the Socialist Party of Raphaël Glucksmann, who has surged by capitalizing on the debacle of The Ecologists. Far-left *La France Insoumise* finished fourth, just ahead of centre-right *Les Républicains*. Eric Zemmour's anti-immigration party *Reconquête!* entered for the first time, obtaining 5 MEPs. Amid the results, on election night President Emmanuel Macron called snap legislative elections to be held on June 30th and July 7th. A move that has dramatically shaken the French political scene, leading to a broad left wing alliance being formed to stop a potential victory of the RN that could produce a far-right Prime Minister for the first time.

Dramatic night for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democratic Party and his coalition partner, the Greens, as they've lost a combined 11 seats falling to the third and fourth positions respectively, proof of the Germans' dissatisfaction with their current government. On the flipside, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) kept their first position maintaining the 29 MEPs they got five years ago. But perhaps the biggest piece of news of the night was the surge of *Alternative für Deutschland*, the far right party that was recently expelled from their European family (ID) for their problematic stances, that rose to the second position powered by their remarkable strength in Eastern Germany. It is also worth to note the irruption of anti-immigration far-left alliance *BSW* with 6 MEPs.

GERMANY

ITALY

All eyes were looking at Italy, as Prime Minister *Georgia Meloni* was regarded as the potential kingmaker of the next EU Commission. Even if the final distribution of forces in the Parliament will not confer her this power, her party *Fratelli d'Italia* scored a resounding victory that consolidates her as the dominant force in Italian politics with 24 seats (up 18) and 29% of the popular vote. On the opposition, centre-left *Partito Democratico (PD)* is having a comeback under new leader *Elly Schlein*, securing a second place with 21 seats and 22% of the vote. Far behind we find populist party *Movimento 5 Stelle*, conservative *Forza Italia* and *Matteo Salvini's Lega* all with 8 seats (*Lega* is down 18 seats from 2019). On the bottom we find the leftist *Green-Left* alliance that was able to secure 6 MEPs after being absent since 2014.

In Spain the two traditional political forces on the centre-right and centre-left had a great night. Thanks to the polarizing power of PM *Pedro Sánchez*, his Socialist Party (PSOE) was able to syphon votes from his left and obtained a close second position, only losing to the conservative *People's Party (PP)*, who is capitalizing on his position as the main opposition force to *Sánchez*. On the far left, the coalition *Sumar* (governing partner of *Sánchez*) suffered a debacle, obtaining only 3 MEPs, almost the same as fellow leftist *Podemos* (2 MEPs), a party that left the coalition amid disagreements. On the far right, *Vox* grew from 3 to 6 MEPs. Which didn't prevent the irruption of new anti-system party *Se Acabó la Fiesta*, led by far-right conspiracy theorist influencer *Alvise Pérez*, that obtained 3 MEPS.

SPAIN

NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands, the left-wing alliance *GroenLinks* conformed by the socialist and green parties was able to secure the first position with 8 seats, mildly reversing the rightward shift the country experimented last November in their general election, that saw far-right *PVV* come on top. Nonetheless, the extremist party led by *Geert Wilders* still managed to cling the second position, obtaining 6 MEPs (up from zero in 2019). Dutch voters seemed to have punished the members of the incoming right-wing government formed by *Wilders' PVV*, liberal *VVD*, the farmer's movement *BBB* and newly formed centre-right party *NSC*. All of which, were down in votes since November, especially *NSC* that went from 13 to 3% of the vote. The Netherlands was the best performing electorate for pan-European party *Volt*, that obtained 5% of the vote and 2 MEPs.

Much like in the Netherlands, the Portuguese were comparing their results to their very recent general election in which the centre-right *Democratic Alliance (AD)* was able to narrowly regain power from the Socialist Party in an election marked by the surge of far-right party *Chega*. In this European election, the Socialists were able to regain the first position with a very narrow victory over *AD*. Obtaining 8 and 7 seats respectively. The big surprise was the poor showing of *Chega* with 2 seats and down 10 percentage points since the March election. On the flipside, the great victors of the night were the centrists of *Iniciativa Liberal*, that doubled their votes from March and secured two MEPs, obtaining European representation for the first time.

PORTUGAL

SWEDEN

Swedish voters sent a clear message to their current centre-right government led by the *Moderate Party* and sustained by far-right *Swedish Democrats*, by awarding a clear victory to the main opposition party, the *Social Democrats*. Interestingly enough, the results and seats obtained by each of the main political forces remained practically the same as 5 years ago in the 2019 election, yet big back and forth movements happened during this time. The erosion of the exercise of power has taken a big toll on the Moderates but especially on the *Swedish Democrats*, who are down 7 percentage points since the last general Swedish election that took place in 2022. Reinforcing thus, the position of the centre-left *Social Democrats*, who are waiting for their turn to retake the reins of the country.

WHO WILL BE THE NEXT EU COUNCIL PRESIDENT?

With Charles Michel's term expiring, the question of his succession is a major one amongst EU chiefs, who look at current and past heads of government in search of an answer. At the moment, the frontrunner is considered to be former Portuguese PM António Costa. However, the legal probe that led to his resignation earlier this year is still ongoing and might be an impediment for his promotion. The consensus appears to be that a Socialist will be taking over from Michel. Hence, if Costa is unable to assume the position, all fingers will be pointing at Mette Frederiksen, the Danish PM, who has been openly running for the job.



EU AND CHINA TO ENTER TRADE CONFLICT OVER TARIFFS ON ELECTRIC CARS

The EU has decided to hike tariffs on all electric cars imported from China from the current 10% duty to a rate that will go from 27,4% to 48,1% depending on the car. This protective measure comes after the EU Commission launched a probe concluding that the Chinese auto industry was benefiting from unfair subsidization from its government to sell at artificially low prices. The Chinese, who see Europe as a growing and lucrative market, have expressed their discontent and promised to retaliate, in what might spiral into a full blown trade war between two world superpowers.



ABORTION SHAPES HEATED G7 SUMMIT

The leaders of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany and Japan visited Puglia in Italy invited by PM Giorgia Meloni to discuss current world issues as part of the latest G7 summit. The leaders, that counted with the visit of the Pope and the Presidents of Argentina and Brazil, tackled aid to Ukraine and artificial intelligence, amongst other topics. The tensions between Emmanuel Macron and Giorgia Meloni led to a heated debate over abortion rights, an issue that was finally left out of their final statement, per request of the Italian chief.



SLOVAK PM FICO SHOT, WHAT DO WE KNOW?

On May 15th, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot multiple times on the streets of the city of Handlova following a public appearance. The leader, a pro-russian populist, has already resumed his public agenda after being in an "extremely critical" state in what constituted the first murder attempt on a sitting EU leader in decades. The police investigation has concluded that the attacker was a 71 old nationalist that acted as a "lone wolf" and was not part of any terrorist organization. The man, who goes by the name of Juraj Cintula is a known pro-russian militant, dissatisfied with the immigration in the country. Fico however, claims that the attack retaliation for his lack of support for Ukraine.

