



MONITORING



PEOPLE

Dods Guide to the European 2019 Elections

Dods Guide to the European 2019 Elections



The EU election promises to be a time of significant upheaval with parliamentary reallocations.

Procedure

- Electoral arrangements
- Influence of national contexts

The European Parliament's elections under preparation

- Key dates
- Preparation by European political parties

Reorganisation of the European Parliament after the elections

- Formation of political groups
- Future of the political groups post-Brexit
- Committees' membership and election of committees' bureau

Policy developments: what happens to unfinished business of the 8th legislature?

I Procedure

Electoral arrangements

The European Parliament elections will take place in all EU Member States between May 23 and May 26 2019, with the results being disclosed only after the closing of all polls in all Member States.

From a procedural point of view, the Treaties do not impose a single electoral procedure: elections remain national, although they do have to follow a proportional system. The electoral system used and the number of constituencies thus varies from Member State to Member State.

As for the number of MEPs and the distribution of seats, in June 2018, the European Council adopted a decision on the composition of the European Parliament following Brexit. The number of MEPs has been reduced from 751 to 705, with 27 of the seats vacated being reallocated among the Member States in line with the principle of degressive proportionality.

The new distribution of seats for the 9th legislature is thus the following:

Table 1:

Number of seats at the European Parliament for each Member State															
MS	DE	FR	UK	IT	ES	PL	RO	NL	EL	BE	PT	CZ	HU	SE	
2014 no. of seats	96	74	73	73	54	51	32	26	21	21	21	21	21	20	
2019 no. of seats	96	79	-	76	59	52	33	29	21	21	21	21	21	21	
MS	AT	BG	DK	SK	FI	IE	HR	LT	SI	LV	EE	CY	LU	MT	
2014 no. of seats	18	17	13	13	13	11	11	11	8	8	6	6	6	6	
2019 no. of seats	19	17	14	14	14	13	12	11	8	8	7	6	6	6	

The European Parliament elections will also feed into the selection of the leadership of the European Commission. The Treaty of Lisbon ([Art. 17.7 TEU](#)) sets out that the result of the European Parliament elections should be taken into account by the European Council, when, acting by a qualified majority, it proposes a candidate for the post of European Commission President to the European Parliament. The candidate is then elected by the European Parliament by a majority of its members.

In the European Parliament elections of 2014, this provision resulted in the introduction of the “Spitzenkandidaten process” (i.e. “lead candidate process”), which is such that (each) political group nominates a candidate for the position of European Commission President ahead of the elections. The candidate from the political group which receives the

most votes would then be nominated by the European Council and supported by the European Parliament for the post of Commission President, provided, of course, that there is consensus amongst the political groups. In a [resolution](#) of February 2018, the European Parliament called for the “Spitzenkandidaten process” to be applied also in the 2019 elections and stated that the European Parliament will not support any candidate for Commission President who has not been designated via this process. It must be borne in mind however that the European Council is not bound by the treaties to follow this “Spitzenkandidaten process” and as such could put forward another candidate, although this could lead to the Parliament potentially rejecting the proposed candidate.

Influence of national contexts

As ever, the European Parliament elections will be largely defined by the national context and with five Member States (Sweden, Latvia, Luxembourg, Estonia and Finland) due to hold elections at the national level prior to the European Parliament vote, the context will likely shift and fluctuate according to results. On the other hand, many voters in the EU view the European Parliament elections as an apparently cost-free opportunity to register dissatisfaction with their national governments. Thus, even if the current solid centre-right majority persists in the European Council, a swing in another direction in the Parliament is conceivable.

National politics will also greatly influence who is put forward as a Spitzenkandidat by the political parties as they have to take into account whether the person in question would be acceptable for his or her country as their candidate for Commissioner. For example, would the Danish right-wing government accept the liberal Commissioner Margrethe Vestager as their candidate for the Commission.

The real question for the next Parliament is perhaps not whether it will be dominated by the right or the left of the political spectrum, but rather whether the mostly pro-European factions of the centre-right, centre-left, liberals and Greens will be able to hold their majority over more Eurosceptical voices.

The rise of populism throughout the continent and its potential to disrupt the status quo is a major challenge. This is an issue throughout the 27 Member States with the German AfD on the rise and Italy governed by a populist coalition and the perceived failure of Brussels to deal with issues such as migration and the belief that the EU

institutions have driven an austerity agenda has only this movement, even if many of these issues are national in origin. The continuation of the blame-Brussels-tactic from many national leaders has only fed into feelings of disquiet with the European project and it remains to be seen whether populist movements on the left and right can take advantage of this.

In all likelihood, these elections will see a different European Parliament emerge with shifting alliances and the Groups forming with new members. The loss of UK MEPs post Brexit will impact some groups more than others due to the numerical split of UK MEPs and this could lead to a need for the existing groups to seek new alliances.



II European Parliament's elections under preparation

Key dates

As regards the work of the European Parliament, three milestones should be kept in mind:

15-18 April 2019: last plenary of the 9th legislature

23-26 May 2019: European elections. No result should be divulged before the end of the election process in all EU countries.

02-04 July 2019: first plenary of the 9th legislature

Table 2:

Day of European elections in each Member State

Voting day	Countries
23 May 2019	NL
25 May 2019	CZ (1st day), MT
26 May 2019	BE, CZ (2nd day), BG, EE, FR, LT, LU, AT, RO, FI, SE
TBC	DK, DE, IE, EL, ES, HR, IT, CY, LV, HU, PL, PT, SI, SK

Preparation by European political parties

Four major European political parties (EPP, PES, ALDE and the Greens) have thus far announced that they will once again support the Spitzenkandidat system under which they will each propose a candidate for the position of Commission President.

The challenge is now for the parties concerned to find their candidates, which is in itself not a simple process as the European political parties gather members from different countries with different political sensitivities. For instance, the Swedish socialists are in general more sceptical about EU integration than German socialists, while the French socialists have always been divided on this issue. Similarly, Polish Christian-Democrats are much more conservative than the French members of the European People's Party (EPP).

In this context, drafting a common European programme that can appeal to all party members and even all EU citizens across borders is a complex task.

Hence, the common manifestos of the EU parties are unlikely to be published before the first months of 2019. It is also likely that these programmes will leave some margin for manoeuvre to adjust to national contexts or nationally grounded issues. The same challenge exists for the designation/election of the leading candidate of each party.

However, we can expect the political parties to produce their own manifestos and announce their candidate for the Commission Presidency, chosen according to internally-defined procedures, before March 2019.

European People's Party

The EPP Political Assembly met in Brussels on December 5 2017 and decided to hold its **Spitzenkandidat election Congress** in Helsinki on November 7-8 2018. At another Political Assembly in Brussels on April 9-10 2018, the EPP unanimously adopted the **procedure and timetable** for the election of the EPP candidate for EU Commission President.

Accordingly, the submission of candidacies from EPP member parties will be open from September 6 until

October 17 2018. The EPP Presidency will then nominate legitimate candidacies. The candidacies will be reviewed by the EPP Political Assembly in its meeting on November 6 2018 and will, after validation, be submitted to vote at the EPP Congress in Helsinki on November 7-8 2018.

The candidate that receives the absolute majority of valid votes will be declared elected. Abstentions are not considered valid votes.

Party of European Socialists

At its Presidency meeting earlier this year in Riga, Latvia, the Party of European Socialists (PES) **decided** on the following indicative timeline to ensure both public awareness of the candidate and the efficiency of the campaign:

19 October 2018

Announcement of the nominations for the common candidate for the President of the European Commission

1 December 2018

PES European Election Day will take place in case there is more than one candidate nominated

7-8 December 2018

PES Congress will take place in Lisbon, Portugal, in order to ratify the results and endorse the common candidate

February 2019

Adoption of the Elections Manifesto.

At the PES Presidency meeting, it was also agreed that the future common candidate will have a key input in shaping the PES manifesto for the 2019 European elections.

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

The Liberals are scheduled to adopt their manifesto at the ALDE Party congress in Madrid on November 8-10 2018. The congress also marks the opening of nominations for the lead candidate. A consultation on the lead candidate status is then held on December 14 2018 in Brussels,

ahead of the European Council. The deadline for nominations stands at February 1 2019. Finalising the process, the Electoral Congress and campaign kick-off will take place at the end of February 2019.

European Green Party

At the 28th European Greens Party's Council, in Antwerp, which took place from May 18 to 20 2018, the Greens adopted a **resolution** establishing the procedure for the selection of two leading candidates / Spitzenkandidaten.

On June 8, the EGP opened the call for contenders. The contenders can present themselves until 14 September and must be officially nominated by the member party of each interested contender.

At least one of the contenders must be eligible for election to the European Parliament and they must present themselves for the European elections on one of the lists (including alliances) of an EU EGP member party. In a second phase, in order to emphasise the

transnational character of the European elections, all contenders must acquire the explicit support of at least five additional EU EGP member parties by 28 September 2018 to become a contender in the election of the Green leading candidates. The contenders' campaign and activities organised by the party will take place from September 29 to November 17.

From November 23 to 25, the 29th **EGP Council** will take place in Berlin. During the congress, the vote to elect the leading candidates will be held. The Greens will also adopt their Manifesto and launch their campaign plan. The leading candidates will be tasked with representing their political family throughout the European campaign.

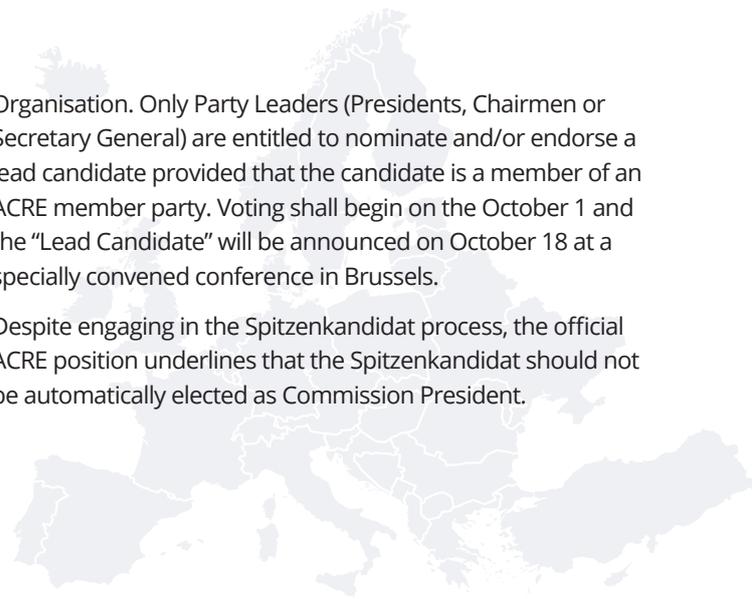
Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists

The ACRE Party has decided to designate a Spitzenkandidat for the 2019 elections. ACRE held its last Council meeting on June 8th, in Baku, Azerbaijan, where it adopted its internal rules regarding the "Lead Candidate" selection process. Nominations for the "Lead Candidate" were opened on June 15 and are currently being submitted to the Returning Officer, ACRE's Chief Executive, Richard Milsom.

In order to be considered a valid nomination, individuals must receive the endorsement of their ACRE EU Member Parties, as well as the endorsement of two additional ACRE EU Member Parties or chairman of an ACRE Affiliate

Organisation. Only Party Leaders (Presidents, Chairmen or Secretary General) are entitled to nominate and/or endorse a lead candidate provided that the candidate is a member of an ACRE member party. Voting shall begin on the October 1 and the "Lead Candidate" will be announced on October 18 at a specially convened conference in Brussels.

Despite engaging in the Spitzenkandidat process, the official ACRE position underlines that the Spitzenkandidat should not be automatically elected as Commission President.



Party of European Left

The Party of the European Left has agreed on a roadmap for the preparation of the manifesto. At the moment, the party is in the middle of the process, with a wide involvement of the member parties of the European Left, in addition to various working group meetings chaired by the Portuguese MEP Marisa Mathias.

The Party expects to vote on its Manifesto at their General Assembly on September 29-30 2018. The General

Assembly is composed of the members of the Executive Board and of the members of the Council of Chairpersons.

The Party is also expected to vote on a possible lead candidate for electioneering at the General Assembly.

The Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe and the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom Party

The Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (ADDE) party, which is composed of parties belonging to the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), and the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom party, which is represented to the European Parliament by Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), have not yet expressed their intentions regarding the upcoming elections.

Both European political parties were created after the last European Parliament elections in 2014. Representatives of the two parties have spoken against the Spitzenkandidaten system and they consider it to be a farce. In all likelihood, a manifesto will be put forward by these parties, although when this will take place remains to be determined.

III Reorganisation of the EP after the elections

Formation of political groups

The groups' formation will take place during June 2019. Each MEP will decide to formally become a member of a political group and each group will elect its bureau and President. As a reminder, a political group in the EP needs to be composed of at least 25 members and represent one quarter of EU Member States (i.e. 7 at present).

We expect some current political groups to reform easily such as the EPP (Christian-Democrats), the S&D (socialists), the ALDE (liberals) and the Greens, probably allying with the European Free Alliance (independents) again.

Future of the political groups post-Brexit

The UK, during the eighth legislature, had 73 MEPs. Following Brexit, there will of course be no British MEPs. This loss of members will likely impact certain groups more than others.

Numerically, the most impacted existing group is the S&D, but proportionately, the ECR (Conservatives) and EFDD (Eurosceptics) stand to lose a greater percentage of their membership.

Please see below for the current British make-up of the political groupings:

EPP	S&D	ECR	ALDE	Greens/EFA	EFDD	EFN	Non-Attached
2	20	19	1	6	19	1	4

Should the political groupings of the eighth legislature return, they will do so in a different fashion and with perhaps slightly different priorities. In terms of political priorities, it is perhaps the ECR that could see the greatest change as, should it return in its present reincarnation, it may be dominated by the socially conservative Polish Law and Justice Party (PiS).

The presence of UK MEPs has prevented the ECR from adopting an overly socially conservative perspective in the past, but this could change in the next legislature. Meanwhile, the EFDD stands to lose one of its founding partners (UKIP) and may thus be increasingly dominated by the Italian Populist 5 Star Movement, should the group re-establish itself.

In addition, the rise of Macron and the centre in France also needs to be taken into account as a decision on where his MEPs would sit has yet to be taken. A series of Summer meetings with centrist movements across various Member States including Spain and Italy has raised numerous questions about whether Macron will lead his MEPs into the ALDE Group or seek another option.

With all of this in mind, it is clear that if the elections return a vaguely similar political make-up, it is the EPP that stands to benefit the most, given that it could see its competitors on both the left and right weakened.

Committees' membership and election of committees' bureau

After the elections, the bureau of the European Parliament (President, vice-Presidents and quaestors) will have to be elected. This will take place during the first plenary session on July 2-4. The President and vice-President should be elected with an absolute majority, i.e. at least 376 votes.

According to the Parliament's [rules of procedure](#), the European Parliament shall set up its standing committees and define its powers. During the month of June 2019, each MEP will express its committee preferences to his/her political group and each political group will make a single proposal to the Conference of Presidents.

Considering the numerical strength of each political group and each committee, the Conference of Presidents will make a single proposal to the plenary session. The decision of committee membership happens twice per term: during the first plenary session of the Parliament following its re-election, and again two-and-a-half years after. Special committees can be set up at any time on a proposal from the Conference of Presidents, defining composition, term of office and powers of these special committees.

Between July 8th and July 25nd, committees will meet for the first time and elect their own bureau (President and vice-Presidents).



IV Policy developments:

What happens to the unfinished business of the 8th legislature?

At the end of the last plenary session before the elections (April 18 2019), the European Parliament's unfinished business (no matter the procedure or its stage) shall be deemed to have lapsed, according to its [rules of procedure](#) (rule 229). At the beginning of the new parliamentary term, the Conference of Presidents shall take a decision on reasoned requests from parliamentary committees and other institutions to resume or continue the consideration of such matters. These provisions shall not apply to petitions and communications that do not require a decision.

The Conference of Presidents traditionally decides to resume all unfinished legislative business. However, the European Commission retains the power to withdraw any tabled proposal, at any stage. In practice, it will be up to the new Commission to decide whether it wishes to withdraw existing proposals.

In 2014 numerous proposals including those on subjects such as investor compensation schemes, pregnant workers, aviation security charges and on a compensation fund for oil pollution damage were withdrawn by the European Commission for a number of reasons including the lack of support for them from the co-legislators.

In cases where the lead committee has adopted its report before the elections, it will almost certainly be placed on the plenary agenda before the end of parliamentary term.

In the very exceptional case that a report has been adopted by a committee but not in plenary before the elections, the procedure set out in Rule 229 would have to be applied. In this case, the "rapporteur" would normally be maintained, if they are re-elected. However, the committee may decide that the report is to be taken over by another member of the newly appointed committee. In most cases, the committee chair becomes rapporteur in such cases.

If the work in committee was not finished and if the Conference of Presidents decides that work should resume, all work done until then remains valid – including the appointment of rapporteurs and draftsmen of opinions and any texts produced by the committee during the term of office of the outgoing Parliament. If the rapporteur (or any of the draftsmen) is not re-elected, the committee will appoint a replacement in accordance with the procedures set out in the Rules for that purpose. The replacement will, in virtually all cases, be a member of the same political group.

In terms of non-legislative work, it would be rare for this to be unfinished by the end of the legislature.



Request a demo today to ensure you are prepared for every stage of the EU Elections and the new Parliament

**Contact: sales@dodsgroup.com
+32 (0)2 741 82 18**

