



POLITICAL  
INTELLIGENCE

# GUIDE *to the* EUROPEAN 2024 ELECTIONS





## Dods European Parliament Elections Package

The European Union's 27 member states are due to hold elections for their European Parliament representatives on June 6-9, 2024. The new cohort of MEPs will have the power to shape and determine EU-wide legislation for the following five years on a wide range of policy areas from climate laws to rules for the financial and tech sectors.

Dods EU Political Intelligence and Dods People EU are joining forces to provide you with everything you need to prepare for the coming changes in the Brussels political scene.

This comprehensive, must-have package will run from September 2023 until the formation of the new European Commission, following the 2024 election.

### What's included

#### Pre-election essentials

##### Guide to the European Elections

Everything you need to know to prepare for the elections, from the voting process to the early preparations of the political parties.

##### What's included: Pre-election:

- Key dates before and after the vote
- Information on current MEPs' intentions to stand again
- Polling information and Spitzenkandidaten speculation
- Full candidate list with top candidates identified
- Summaries of party manifestos summaries
- Pending legislative dossiers

##### What's included: Post-election:

- Results
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# Guide to the European 2024 elections

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## Introduction

The European Parliament elections, the world's largest transnational poll, are scheduled to be held between June 6 and June 9, 2024, with the results due only after polls have closed in all member states. The vote to pick a new cohort of MEPs for the next five-year term follows one of the most tumultuous periods in the recent history of the European Union and comes at a key juncture as it seeks to reposition itself in an increasingly divided world. Some polls indicate the elections could mark a further political reshaping of the Parliament with growing support for conservative and far-right voices threatening the stability of the grand coalition of centre-right, centre-left and centrist groups and posing a threat to the Parliament's consensus-based decision-making tradition in the Parliament.

This Dods Political Intelligence report provides everything you need to know to prepare for the European elections, including national seat allocations, the Spitzenkandidaten process to pick the President of the European Commission, key dates, useful background information, and details on the early preparations of the political parties.

## Procedure

### Electoral arrangements

The European Parliament is due to grow to 720 MEPs after the 2024 elections, 15 more than in the previous five-year term including two more seats for France, Spain and Netherlands, if member states and the Parliament sign off the plans.

In June 2023, the plenary adopted a report the allocation of seats for member states which would have increased the number of MEPs to 716. They also agreed to apply the degressive proportionality principle which gives smaller member states more seats than they would otherwise be eligible for according to the proportion of their population. However, since then the European Council proposed adding four more seats, two to France, one to Belgium and one to Poland, which is subject to approval by MEPs. The European Council's Act requires the Parliament's consent to be adopted.

The EU's member states each conduct the European elections according to their own electoral procedures and constituencies, though they must follow a proportional representation system. While there have been moves to harmonise the 27 national polls into a single European election, this is not expected to be concluded before the 2024 vote. Although MEPs backed a draft legislative act on electoral reform in May 2022, the Council has yet to take a position.

If approved, the national distribution of seats in the new Parliament will be as follows:

MEMBER STATE	2019	2024	MEMBER STATE	2019	2024
Germany	96	96	Bulgaria	17	17
France	79	81	Denmark	14	15
Italy	76	76	Slovakia	14	15
Spain	59	61	Finland	14	15
Poland	52	53	Ireland	13	14
Romania	33	33	Croatia	12	12
Netherlands	29	31	Lithuania	11	11
Greece	21	21	Slovenia	8	9
Belgium	21	22	Latvia	8	9
Portugal	21	21	Estonia	7	7
Czech Republic	21	21	Cyprus	6	6
Hungary	21	21	Luxembourg	6	6
Sweden	21	21	Malta	6	6
Austria	19	20			

### Spitzenkandidaten process

The European Parliament elections should also feed into the selection of the leadership of the European Commission. According to the Treaty of Lisbon (Art. 17.7 TEU), the European Council should take into account the results of the parliamentary elections when, acting by a qualified majority, it proposes a candidate for European Commission President. The candidate is then subject to an election in the European Parliament.

The so-called Spitzenkandidaten process, is a procedure whereby the political parties each name their lead candidate for Commission president ahead of EU elections, paving the way for the Council to pick the one the results show can marshal the strongest parliamentary support to face the vote by MEPs. The process, which is intended to give voters a greater say in the leadership of the EU's executive, was run for the first time in 2014, with Jean-Claude Juncker, the lead candidate of the European People's Party (EPP), elected president of the Commission. However, the process was rejected in 2019 when member states put forward former German minister Ursula von der Leyen for the Commission presidency instead of backing the centre-right Spitzenkandidat Manfred Weber. The move came after Donald Tusk, the European Council

President at the time, reiterated the member states’ right to propose a candidate to the Parliament. Nevertheless, several political parties have said they plan to propose a Spitzenkandidat. In a recent draft report, the European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) lamented the lack of progress on the lead candidate system since 2019 and called on political parties to nominate their candidate for Commission president at least 12 weeks before the elections.

European citizens considered the selection process for European Commission presidents during an EU-wide series of debates and consultations in 2021-22 called the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoEU). Among the proposals presented by the Conference, [point 38\(4\)](#) states that *‘European citizens should have a greater say on who is elected as President of the Commission. This could be achieved either by the direct election of the Commission President or a lead candidate system’*.

### **Influence of national politics**

Although the elections will determine the representatives of the EU’s legislative body for the next five-year term, the campaigns and results tend to be driven by national political concerns. With nearly half of the member states holding domestic elections before the European Parliament vote or planning them not long after, shifts in political balances at the national level are expected to be reflected in Brussels. The cost-of-living crisis and debates about the green transition have contributed to rising support for right-wing populism in many parts of Europe, and national election outcomes could nudge European centrist politics further to the right. However, if this is reflected in the European elections it may not necessarily lead to increased calls for member states to quit the European project, given that the sobering effect of Brexit has convinced many to focus their energies on reshaping the EU in their own image.

According to recent polls, the right-wing European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) could increase their number of seats, with support from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni’s far-right Brothers of Italy. Likewise, the far-right Identity and Democracy (ID) group is expected to increase its representation with the support of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. The traditional grand coalition of the centre-right EPP and centre-left Socialists & Democrats (S&D), and the Renew Europe group, is still expected to maintain a majority for pro-EU parties within the Parliament. However, questions have been raised about the impact of rising support for conservative and hard-right parties on the centrist groups, with the EPP showing willingness to partner with the ECR on some green deal legislation.







## Preparation

### Key dates

22-25 April 2024: Last plenary of the 9<sup>th</sup> legislature.

6-9 June 2024: European elections.

July 2024 (TBC): European Council Summit to nominate new Presidents of the European Council, European Commission and the European Central Bank, and the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

16-18 July 2024: First plenary of 10<sup>th</sup> legislature.

- Election of the new European Parliament President, Vice-Presidents and Quaestors.
- (TBC) Potential approval of the candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission.

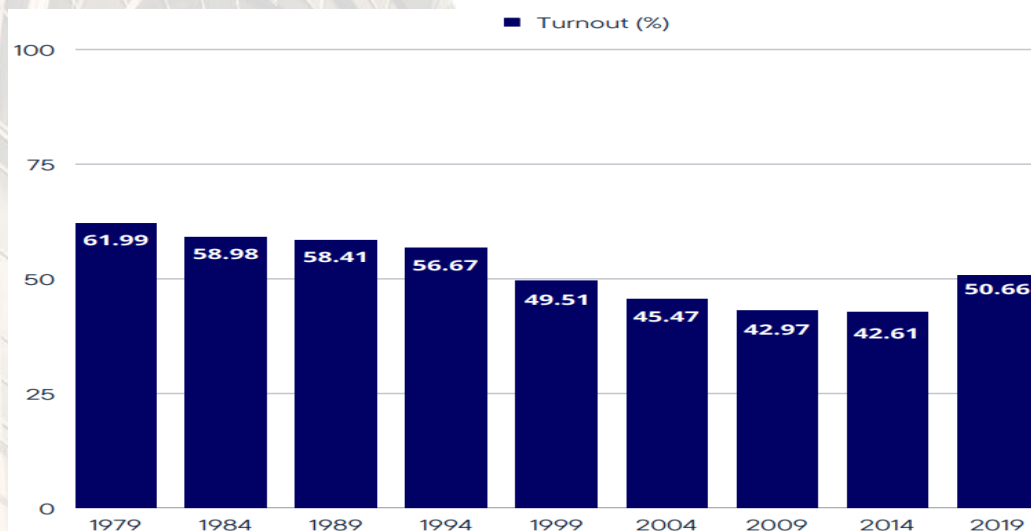
22-25 July 2024: First Committee meetings - Formation of Committees and elections of Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

### 2019 results and other historical data

European elections' results: The EPP won the 2019 elections, with the S&D coming second, though both groups lost seats. Since 2009, a political group shall consist of at least 25 Members elected in at least seven Member States. Please see below for the 2019-2024 European Parliament's composition (751 seats in total – although this dropped to 705 after Brexit):

- EPP: 182 seats
- S&D: 154 seats
- Renew Europe: 108 seats
- Greens/EFA: 74 seats
- ID: 73 seats
- ECR: 62 seats
- NI: 57 seats
- The Left: 41 seats

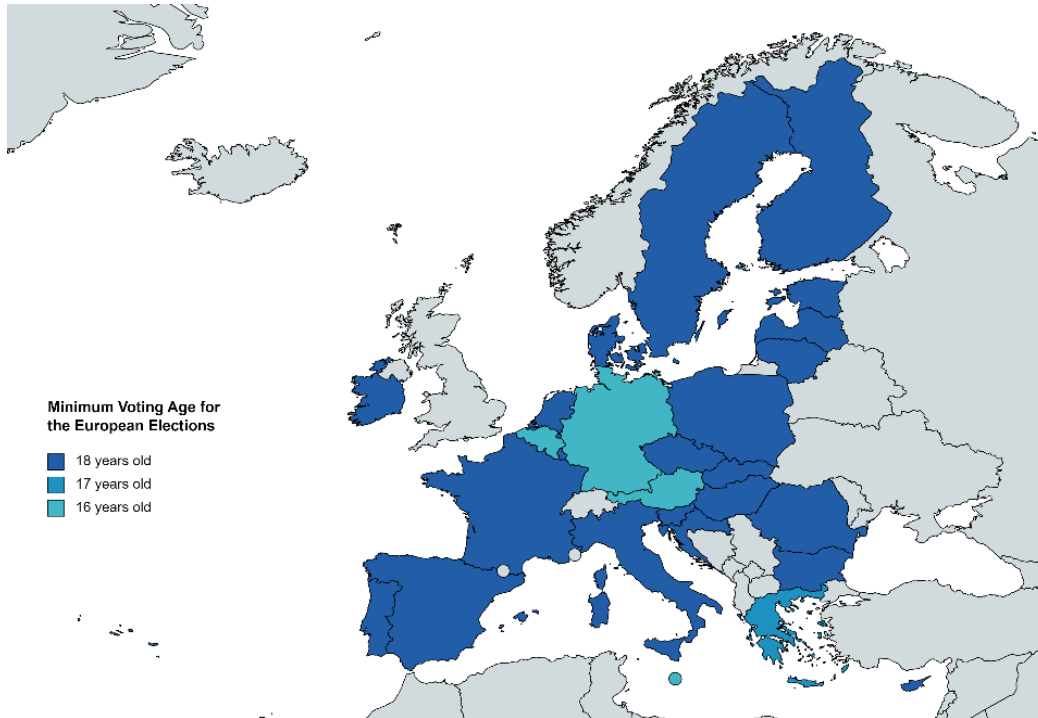
Turnout: In 2019, the turnout in the European elections rose for the first time since 1979, increasing to 51 percent, the highest level since 1994.



(Source: [Turnout | 2019 European election results | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#))

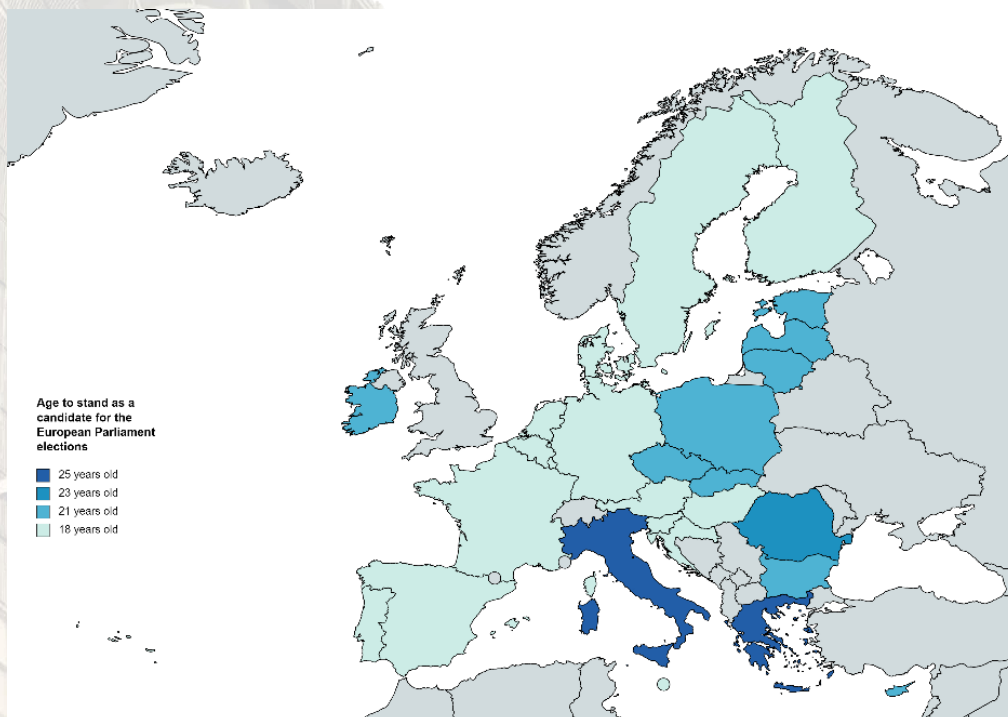


**Voting age:** In most member states, the voting age for European elections is 18, with the exception of Greece where it is 17, and Austria, Malta, and Germany where it is 16 and Belgium where 16 years-olds can vote after submitting a request to their municipality of residence.



(Source: [Voting age for European elections | EPRS European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#))

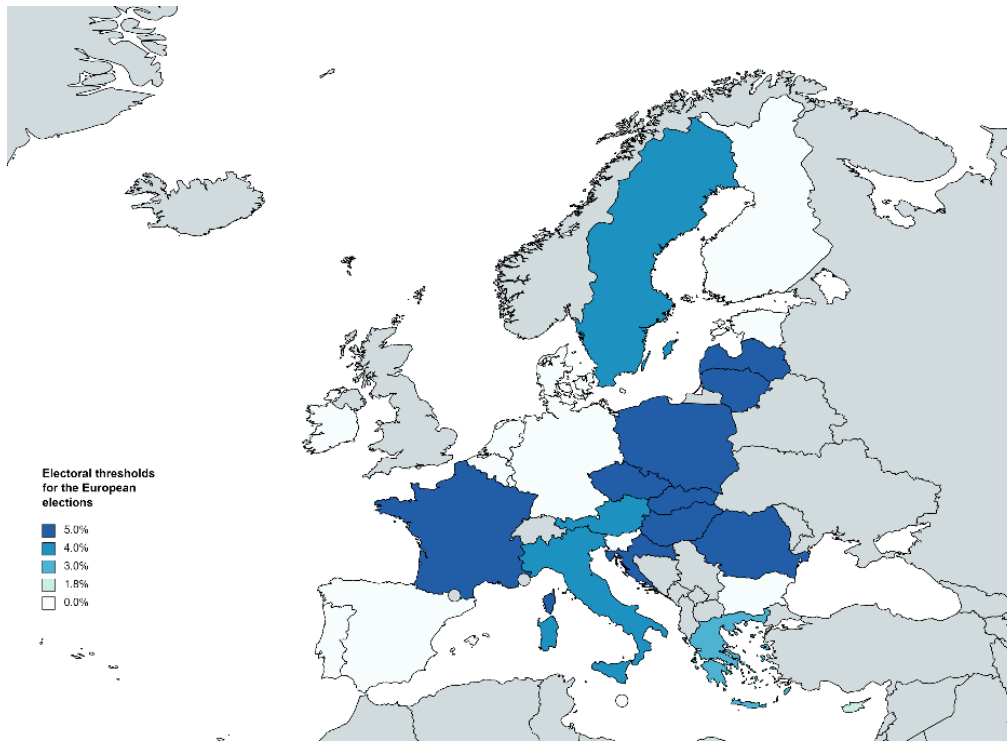
**Age to stand as a candidate for EU elections:** The minimum age for candidates is decided by each member state, ranging from 18 in 15 countries to 25 in Italy and Greece. For the 2024 elections, Belgium lowered the threshold to 18 from 21.



(Source: [Minimum age to stand as a candidate in European elections | EPRS European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#))



**Election minimum votes threshold:** The current minimum percentage of valid votes needed for the allocation of seats ranges from 5 percent in countries like France and Hungary to zero in Spain and Germany.



(Source: [Electoral thresholds in European Parliament elections | EPRS European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](https://eprs.europa.eu/elections/election-thresholds/))

## Preparations of political parties

While some political parties have said they will follow the Spitzenkandidaten process, others are still internally debating such a possibility. Overall, and compared to 2019 elections, dates and deadlines appear to have been delayed and major decisions will be taken only in the coming months. Whatever they decide, the process to pick a lead candidate to represent a political group made up of parties from across the EU, each with their own internal rules and procedures, remains as challenging as ever. The political groups are expected to publish their European manifestos a few months before the elections following consultations between their member parties.

### European People’s Party (EPP)



The EPP met in Munich on May 4-5 for a Political Assembly which focused on European and German politics ahead of state elections in Bavaria in October 2023. However, a [statement](#) following an EPP Summit on June 29 did not mention the Spitzenkandidaten process or the European Manifesto. The party is now scheduled to [meet again](#) on September 4-5 with the issues of recent electoral campaigns of EPP member parties and preparations for the European Parliament elections on the agenda.

### Party of European Socialists (PES)



The Party of European Socialists agreed to support the Spitzenkandidaten process for the 2024 EU elections at a meeting in Berlin on October 14, 2022. The party aims to select a lead candidate and adopt a manifesto at a congress at least four months before the elections. However, Iratxe García Pérez, President of the S&D political group in the Parliament, has expressed uncertainty about the selection of a lead candidate.



## Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party (ALDE)



The Liberals are in the [process](#) of preparing their manifesto under the guidance of the party's Manifesto Drafting Committee composed by ALDE members and other key stakeholders, chaired by ALDE Vice-President MEP Svenja Hahn. Town Hall meetings with citizens are scheduled to take place from June to September 2023, with the manifesto due to be put up for final adoption at the ALDE Party Congress along with the launch of the electoral campaign.

At an ALDE Party Congress in Stockholm in May 2023, members agreed to present a Spitzenkandidat as the party "should pro-actively promote the direct link between the European voters and power". However, the decision is not yet definitive as the Renew Europe group in the European Parliament has yet to announce its own position.

## European Green Party (EGP)



The Greens agreed a [resolution](#) establishing a procedure for selecting two leading candidates at an the extraordinary 37<sup>th</sup> European Green Party Congress in Vienna on June 2-3 2023. The Party launched its lead candidates' process in June, with the call for contenders due to open on 6 November. Contenders have until November 28 to throw their hat in the ring, and must be nominated by their member party. All the contenders will then present themselves at the 38th EGP Congress, which will take place online from December 2-3, 2023.

The contenders must get the backing of at least five additional EU EGP member parties by January 7, 2024, to stay in the race. The two leading candidates are due to be elected at an extraordinary extended Congress on February 2-3, 2024, where the party will also agree a manifesto and priorities. According to EGP rules, at least one of the elected contenders must be a woman and the two leading candidates cannot be from the same country.

## European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)



The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR Party) has said it will not designate a Spitzenkandidat for 2024 elections as it did in 2019, on the grounds that the leading candidate process is not required in the EU's Treaties.

On June 26, 2023, the ECR Party Council renewed the mandate of President Giorgia Meloni and Vice-President Buxadè and Fogiel. Previously, the ECR Party appointed MEP Nicola Procaccini as co-chairman of the ECR Group in the European Parliament.

## Identity and Democracy Party



The Identity and Democracy Party, formerly known as the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (MENF), does not recognise the Spitzenkandidaten process on the grounds that it limits the ability for member states to select a candidate. The group has seen changes recently, with the Finns Party switching to the ECR group, while the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) joined in July 2023.

## Party of European Left



The Party of European Left includes left-wing, socialist, and communist parties and its members sit in the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group in the European Parliament. The Party launched the process to nominate a lead candidate for the 2024 EU elections at a European Left General Assembly in Vienna in June 2023, as confirmed by MEP Manon Aubry, President of The Left Group in the European Parliament.



## After the elections

### Formation of political groups

The political groups, which must have at least 25 members and represent one quarter of EU member states, are formed following the elections, though for many of the parties and MEPs involved, this process is a foregone conclusion due to established political affiliations. Nevertheless, MEPs must formally become a member of a political group, with each group electing a president and its bureau, or staff.

### Election of Committees' bureau

The Bureau of the European Parliament, comprised of the European Parliament President, vice-presidents and quaestors is chosen after the European elections. Each parliamentary committee also elects a bureau, consisting of a chair and vice-chairs, in separate ballots. The number of vice-chairs elected is determined by the parliament after a proposal by the Conference of Presidents. Elections for the bureau are scheduled to take place during the first plenary session of the new European Parliament on July 16-18.

### What happens to the unfinished business of the 9th legislature?

According to procedure, at the end of the last part-session before elections, scheduled this time for April 22-25 2024, all unfinished parliamentary business shall be deemed to have lapsed, regardless of what stage it is at. At the beginning of the new parliamentary term, the Conference of Presidents will take a decision on any requests from parliamentary committees and other institutions whether to resume or continue the business. However, these provisions do not apply to petitions, citizens' initiatives and communications that do not require a decision.

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