

## 2/3 – European political groups in Parliament

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On the eve of the 2019 European elections, Lighthouse Europe is offering a series of articles to help you understand how the European Parliament works and what are the challenges of this electoral period. The series is made up of three articles, published every Wednesday:

1/3 – How are the Members of the European Parliament elected and what are their functions?

**2/3 – European political groups in Parliament**

3/3 – Digital players at the heart of the European elections

### ► Formation of the groups at European level

Once the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have been elected by the citizens, they join political groups, composed of **at least 25 members** from at least **7 Member States**. Following the 2014 elections, **eight European political groups** were formed in the Parliament:

- ◆ The Group of the European People's Party (**EPP**),
- ◆ The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament (**S&D**),
- ◆ The European Conservatives and Reformists Group (**ECR**),
- ◆ The Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (**ADLE**),
- ◆ The Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (**GUE/NGL**),
- ◆ The Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (**Greens/EFA**),
- ◆ The Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group (**EFDD**),
- ◆ The Non-attached Members – Members not belonging to any political group (**NI**).

In addition to these groups, the Europe of Nations and Freedom Group (**ENF**) has been launched in June 2015, by Marine Le Pen among others.

The **EPP** and **S&D** led the European elections in 2014, winning 221 (29.43%) and 191 (25.43%) of the 751 seats. The third leading political group was the ECR with 70 seats.

From May 27, **negotiations** will begin between European elected representatives **to form the political groups** of the new Parliament. The composition of the current groups will change and new groups will be created. The ALDE could create a political group in collaboration with the party of the French President Emmanuel Macron, **La République en Marche** – center to center-right party – (LRM). The Italian Minister of the Interior, Matteo Salvini, launched his European political movement, the



**European Alliance of Peoples and Nations**, supported by the *Rassemblement National* – far-right party – (RN).

The various political groups will only be confirmed after negotiations between the newly elected MEPs.

According to the [latest estimates](#)<sup>1</sup>, **mainstream political groups** will face the distrust of some voters as observed at national level in the various elections of most Member States.

The EPP would thus obtain 170 seats, the S&D 146 seats, the ALDE and LRM 105 seats, the new unaffiliated parties 72 seats and the European Alliance of Peoples and Nations of Salvini 70 seats, followed by the ECR with 60 potential seats.

### ► **The European elections in France**

The **2014 European elections** have marked a **turning point** in French political life as the two leading parties, the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* – right wing party – (UMP) and the Parti Socialiste – left wing party – (PS), only got the second and third place in [this election](#). **The National Front** – RN former name – (FN) had overtaken the two political parties by winning 24 seats against 20 and 13. For the first time, the FN won an election at the national level.

Other **major political changes** have disrupted France, particularly during the 2017 presidential election. Emmanuel Macron has been elected [President](#) (66.10 % of the votes cast) against Marine Le Pen (33.9 %). His election has marked a **renewal in the French political landscape** with the creation of his party, *La République en Marche*, in 2016. The political movement is presented as an innovative party, far from traditional parties, neither right nor left, represented by young people, women and the civil society. During the [legislative elections](#) of the same year, LRM won a majority in the National Assembly.

Already challenged by citizens in the 2014 European elections, mainstream parties have been once again challenged. The UMP, renamed *Les Républicains* (LR), only reached the third position in the presidential election while the PS the fifth position, behind Jean-Luc Mélenchon of *France Insoumise* (LFI). Thus, the European representatives of French citizens should also be renewed compared to the last legislature.

**French candidates for the 2019 European elections** are registered on their party's national list. Each list is led by a chief candidate. On May 26, French citizens will have to choose between the **34 lists** submitted, including:

- ◆ *La République en Marche* (LRM), led by Nathalie Loiseau, former Minister for European Affairs. The official name of the list is "Renaissance", a project launched by the Presidential Party for a transformation of the European Union (EU). The elected deputies could join forces with the ALDE to form a new political group in the European Parliament.
- ◆ The **RN** is led by Jordan Bardella. The MEPs will form, together with other European representatives, the European Alliance of Peoples and Nations created by Mr Salvini.
- ◆ François-Xavier Bellamy is the head of **LR** list, part of the EPP.
- ◆ **LFI** is represented by Manon Aubry. The future MEPs will join the GUE/NGL.
- ◆ The members of the Parti Communiste Français – communist party – (**PCF**) sit in the same political group. Ian Brossat is at the head of the list.
- ◆ **Europe Écologie – Les Verts** – environmentalist party – is led by Yannick Jadot to join the Greens/EFA in the European Parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> May 14 2019

- ◆ The head of *Debout La France* – nationalist and conservative party – (**DLF**) list is Nicolas Dupont-Aignan. He was candidate during the 2017 presidential election and joined Marine Le Pen for the second round of the election. His lists, the Lovers of France, supports the ECR.
- ◆ The **Parti Socialiste** (PS) and **Place publique**, political movement co-founded by Raphaël Glucksmann, are allies and led by him for the European elections. Nouvelle Donne – left wing party – has joined the list. The elected deputies will join the S&D.
- ◆ Benoît Hamon, former PS candidate during the 2017 presidential election is the head of **Génération.s** list for “Be European Spring” pan European list.
- ◆ Florian Philippot, former executive of the FN, leads **Les Patriotes** – far-right party – allied to the EFDD at the European level.
- ◆ *L’Union des démocrates et indépendants* – right wing party – (**UDI**) led by Jean-Christophe Lagarde, will join the ALDE.
- ◆ Nathalie Arthaud represents the *Lutte Ouvrière* – far-left party – (**LO**).
- ◆ *L’Union populaire républicaine* – nationalist party – (**UPR**) is led by François Asselineau, in favor of the French exit of the EU.

According to the [latest polls](#)<sup>2</sup> LRM et RN are at the top of the voting list. According to these estimates, both of them could won 22% of the votes, followed by LR with 14%. The PS would receive only 5% of the votes, placing itself in sixth position behind *Europe Écologie - Les Verts* and LFI.

Facing the European citizens' disapproval, the central role of traditional government parties has been challenged in favor of new political movements. The national political landscape of many EU Member States, such as France, have thus been deeply renewed. These evolutions will have a decisive impact on the re-composition of the political groups in the future European Parliament, on democratic representation and on the future interinstitutional balance.

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<sup>2</sup> May 14 2019