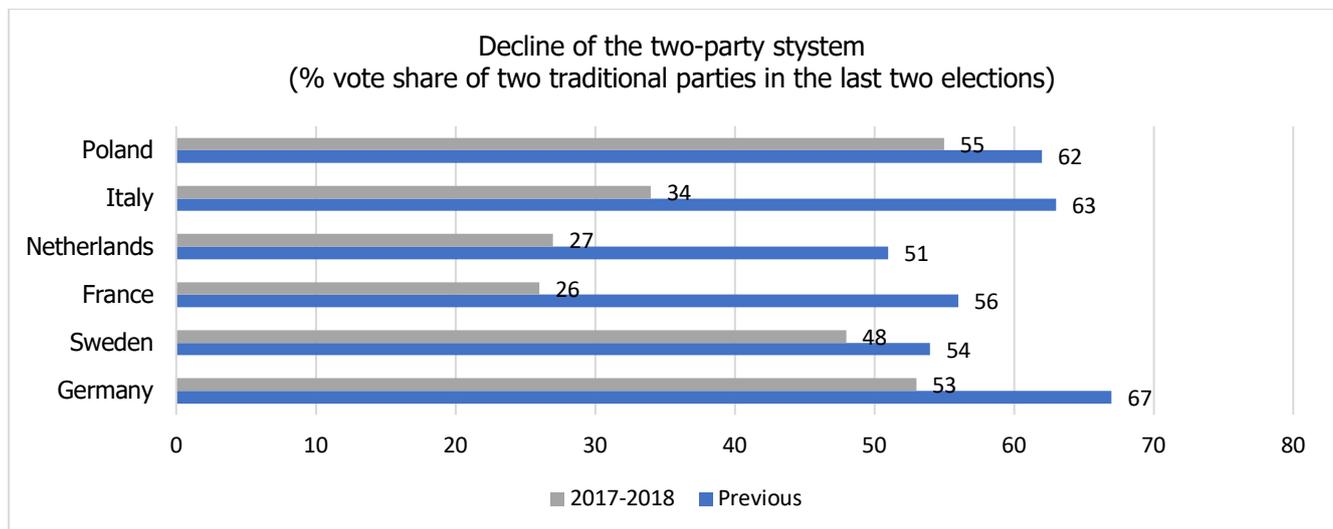


**Summary Report**  
DIFF GOV City Talk #1 Part #1

**HOPES and DREAMS: What to expect from the European Parliament elections**  
by Dr. Kinga Brudzińska

The Eurosceptics' overall vote share in the next European Parliamentary (EP) elections is expected to increase. Based on their political platform they may disrupt the traditional European agenda or at least make the European Union (EU) decision-making process more troublesome.

Party politics across Europe is changing, with traditional parties losing ground to new movements. This is the case in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Slovakia, and Sweden just to mention few. The outcome of the upcoming European Parliamentary election will certainly reflect national trends. Those are: the decline of the two-party system and the increase in support for far-right and centrist parties.



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2018, A new political phase for Europe; Kantar Millward Brown Support for Political Parties in Poland.

The established parties in the European Parliament such as the European People's Party (EPP) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialist and Democrats (S&D) will lose seats to newcomers<sup>1</sup>. It also means that the EPP-S&D tandem, for the first time in four decades, may not enjoy a majority and it could be forced to form a broader coalition in order to pass EU legislation. The polls suggest that the EPP may have 39 seats less than today and the S&D 53 less<sup>2</sup>. This would give them 316 seats out of the total of 705 (assuming the UK leaves the EU without holding elections), which is less than 353 votes that will be required for a simple majority.

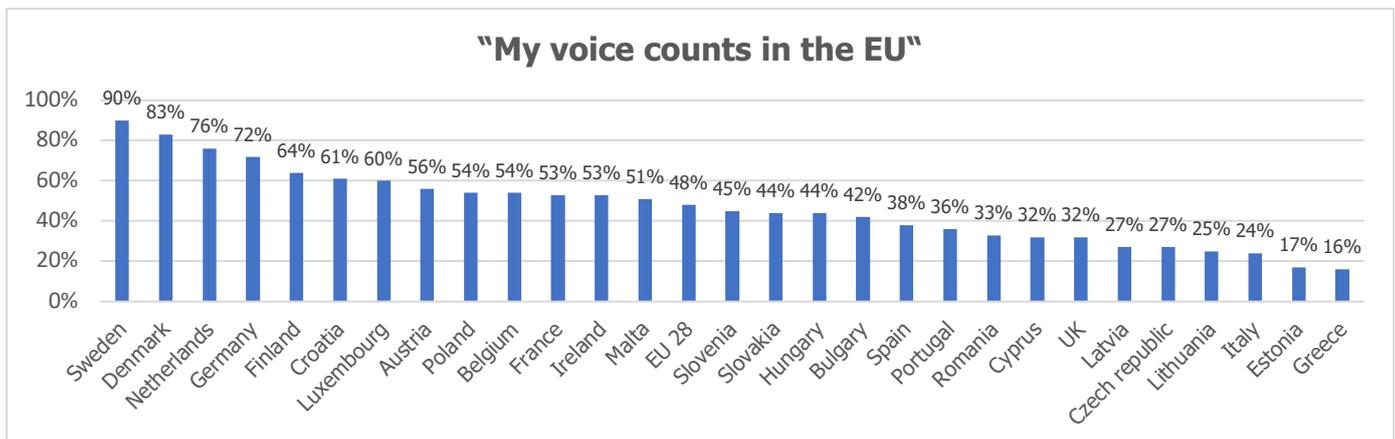
<sup>1</sup> Agata Gostyńska-Jakubowska, Leonard Schuette, The European Parliament elections: different this time?, Center for European Reform, 22 March 2019, [cer.eu/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2019/european-parliament-elections-different-time](http://cer.eu/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2019/european-parliament-elections-different-time)

<sup>2</sup> Projections of seats of next Parliament, the European Parliament 2019, [europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/elections-press-kit/5/what-europe-does-for-me](http://europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/elections-press-kit/5/what-europe-does-for-me)

Political party	Projections by seats at EP (01/03/2019)	Current state of EP seats (late Feb. 2019)	
European People’s Party (EPP)	181	217	-36
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	135	186	-51
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)	75	68	+7
Greens/ European Free Alliance (EFA)	49	52	+3
Freedom and Direct Democracy Group (EFDD)	39	41	+2
European Conservatives and Reformist (ECR)	46	75	+29
Europe of Nations and Freedom Group (ENF)	59	37	+22
Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)	47	52	-5
Non-attached Members	8	22	-14
Others – New Members that are not affiliated yet with any group	66		+66
Total	705	750	

Source: Projections of seats of next Parliament, the European Parliament, 2019.

New and different does not equal bad. Bigger competition for the EU seats may, for example, mobilise the forces with pro-European agendas, force the traditional EP parties to show differences in their programmes, and finally increase the public interest in upcoming EP elections. What follows, a more diversified European Parliament, may even better represent EU citizens and address the democratic deficit in the EU. On average, only 48% of respondents feel that their voice currently counts in the EU, according to a 2018 Parlemeter survey. The citizens of Greece (16%), Estonia (17%), Italy (24%), Lithuania (25%), Latvia (27%) have particularly low confidence in their moving power in the EU.



Source: Parlameter 2018, Q2.

But the big question remains who the newcomers are (anti- or pro-European) and how many seats they win. There are two type of newcomers. First, pro-European movements that are not affiliated yet with any group, such as Emmanuel Macron’s La République En Marche, that are expected to win 10% of the votes (they may either form their own political group or join forces with the parties already in the EP). Second, the group of Eurosceptics, spanning from moderate conservatives to the far right such as France’s National

Rally, Italy's League party or Poland's Law and Justice Party, that could take more than one-fifth of the seats (21.5%).

Therefore, even though the Eurosceptics' vote share in the next EP elections is projected to be higher than those of pro-European newcomers, overall they will not have enough seats to disrupt the EU governance project from inside. They may however try to disrupt the European agenda or at least make EU decision-making process more troublesome. It all depends on whether they can put their differences aside and effectively form coalitions. It is worth remembering that, for example, on the topics of European migration policy or EU relations with Russia, the approaches of the Italian League party and the Polish Law and Justice Party are from extremely different ends.

What is already clear now is that the EP will be more diverse and the new European Commission more colourful. For example, if the ruling parties of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland or Romania are successful in May, they may send more expressive representative to Brussels<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, a more fragmented political landscape in the European Parliament would complicate coalition making (most probably ad-hoc and cross-party) and policymaking, which will be reflected by weaker legislative activity and could prove crucial for timely approval of the EU's 2021-27 budget<sup>4</sup>. What is more, after the new elections, the EU may become more inward-looking, and supporters of the long-standing myth that the European Union is a 'bureaucratic monster' will have a chance to applaud<sup>5</sup>.

*The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."*



**EURO NA SLOVENSKU:  
OBLÚBENÉ  
ČI ZATRACOVANÉ?**

DEBATA K 10. VÝROČIU EURA NA SLOVENSKU,  
20. NARODENINÁM JEDNOTNEJ MENY  
A BUDÚCNOSTI EUROZÓNY

**Utorok 2.4.2019 | 13:30 – 15:00**  
Prednášková miestnosť P4  
Fakulta politických vied a medzinárodných vzťahov  
Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici

**HOPES AND DREAMS:  
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM  
THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS?**

DEBATE WITH ZUZANA PODRACKÁ, PROJECT  
COORDINATOR AND KINGA BRUDZINSKA, SENIOR  
RESEARCHER, GPI

**Tuesday 2.4.2019 | 10:30 – 11:30**  
Dayroom on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Faculty of Political Science and International Relations  
Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica

<sup>3</sup> B. Wielniński, After the elections, the Commission will certainly be more colourful, Euractiv, 25 October 2018, [euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/researcher-after-the-elections-the-commission-will-certainly-be-more-colourful/](http://euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/researcher-after-the-elections-the-commission-will-certainly-be-more-colourful/)

<sup>4</sup> A new political phase for Europe, the Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2018, [eiu.com/public/topical\\_report.aspx?campaignid=EuropeNewPhase2018](http://eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=EuropeNewPhase2018)

<sup>5</sup> Europe's integration myths: GLOBSEC Guide for debunking myths about the European Union, 15 May 2018, [globsec.org/publications/globsec-guide-for-debunking-myths-about-the-european-union/#UBlk3CrmvPWUxkJL.99](http://globsec.org/publications/globsec-guide-for-debunking-myths-about-the-european-union/#UBlk3CrmvPWUxkJL.99)