

The new European Parliament: what to expect

From 22 to 25 May 2014, Europeans went to the polls. Many of them went to express their dissatisfaction. Although the majority of the incoming 751 MEPs remain broadly supportive of the EU, both they and those who need to engage with the European Parliament will have to adapt to the increased power of a disparate anti-EU and anti-establishment minority over the next five years.

This briefing provides an overview of the election results* at the EU level and what happens next, further analysis on results in France, Germany, Greece and the UK, a look at the key outgoing and incoming MEPs, and an examination of the selection procedures for the new leaders of the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council.

The election results

The election saw a marked rise, of about 10%, in the number of MEPs elected from anti-EU and anti-establishment parties from both ends of the political spectrum. They won around 230, or 31%, of the 751 seats, compared to 164, or 21%, of the 766 seats in 2009. What remains to be seen is whether the newly-elected MEPs will join existing, or form new, political groups in the Parliament (see below for more information on the importance of political groups and how they are formed).

Despite their decreased numbers, the pro-Europeans remain the dominant force in the European Parliament. Their four groups – the centre-right, the centre-left, the liberals and the greens – won 521, or 69%, of the 751 available seats. The centre-right, pro-European European People's Party (EPP) remains the largest group, despite losing 53 seats. The centre-left Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) held its position as the second largest political group, losing only 7 MEPs. This is, in effect, an unchanged number of MEPs as the total has fallen from 766 to 751 with the Lisbon Treaty coming into effect.



The European Parliament in Brussels

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the third largest political group in the outgoing Parliament, suffered heavily, losing 24 of its 83 MEPs. The Greens lost five of their 57 seats, and European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) lost 11 of their 57.

Turn-out was essentially unchanged from 2009 at 43.1%, with turn-out for individual Member States ranging from 13% in Slovakia to 90% in Belgium and Luxembourg (the latter two have compulsory voting).

* The figures and analysis in this briefing are based on figures obtained from the European Parliament website, accessed on 3 June 2014. These may not be the final figures as negotiations for membership of the political groups are ongoing

What to expect from the 2014-2019 European Parliament?

More consensus?

A larger anti-EU caucus will require the EPP and S&D, who continue to have a combined majority, to work together more closely. The first signs of such collaboration have already been seen in the S&D backing the EPP's Jean-Claude Juncker to take over as President of the European Commission. We can also expect more collaboration between the EPP and ALDE and between the S&Ds and the Greens as they seek to prevent anti-EU MEPs from hindering the progress of 'pro-Europe' legislation.

More time pressure for interest groups?

There will be fewer constructive MEPs in the all-important parliamentary committees, putting a greater workload on those who are there. And these MEPs will have less time to consider representations from businesses. Businesses are also more likely to attempt to engage with these MEPs either because they are unable to convince an anti-EU MEP to take on their issues or because they are concerned about the risk of alienating the pro-European majority of MEPs by association with an anti-EU MEP.

On the other hand, the 2009-2014 term was almost unique in the weight of its legislative programme. Most of the post-crisis legislation has been passed, meaning that this Parliament's legislative programme will be different, in particular potentially facing less pressured timeframes.

Less harmonisation?

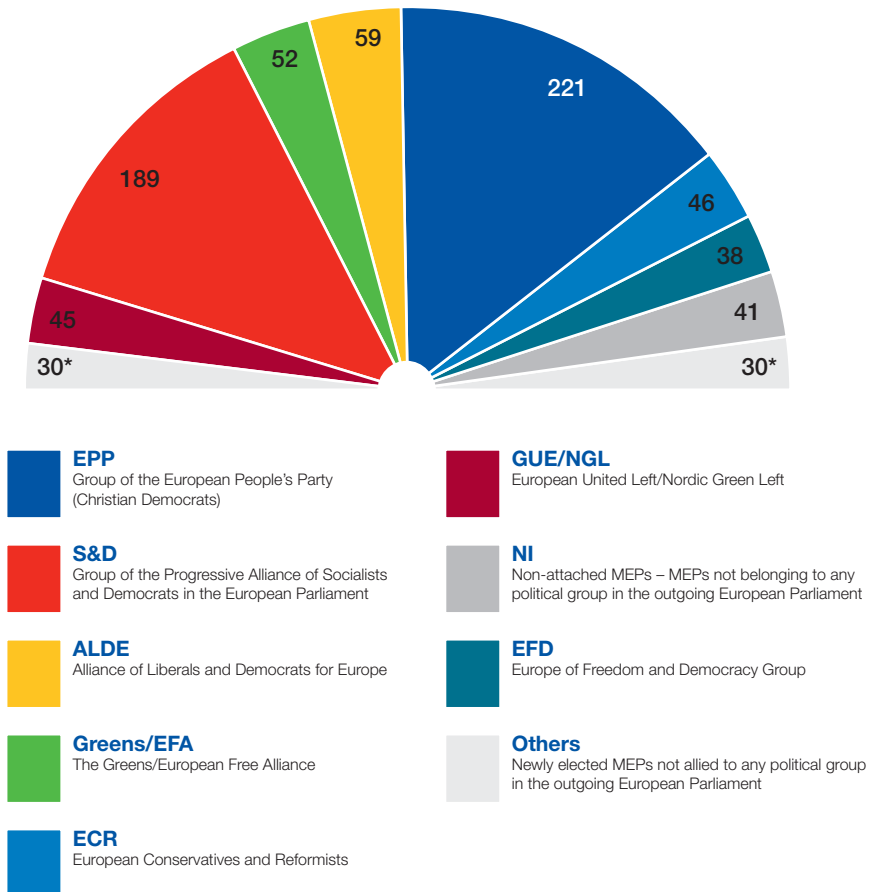
Attempts by this new European Parliament to achieve any further harmonisation in, for example, financial services, will almost certainly meet loud opposition from the anti-EU parties, and Member States who will have been stung in many cases by the electorates' rejection of established parties.

It will also be interesting to see how the new European Parliament proceeds with proposed laws on electronic communications and copyright protection, which are integral to plans to create a digital single market within

the EU. The election saw the departure of several MEPs who were very involved in these issues, as well as some of the key proponents for both copyright reform and maintaining strong copyright protection (see below for more information on key incoming and outgoing MEPs).

Next steps

Over the next few weeks and months, MEPs will help to decide upon the new leaders of key EU institutions, as well as starting to perform their main function of shaping legislation in committees and at plenary sessions.



* Please note that this split does not accurately reflect the political orientations of the 60 newly elected MEPs not allied to any political group in the outgoing European Parliament

MEPs will vote on a new President of the European Parliament to replace Martin Schulz during their first plenary session at the start of July and, later in July, they will decide whether to accept European leaders' nomination for the next President of the Commission.

For the first time, the large official political groups each selected and promoted a

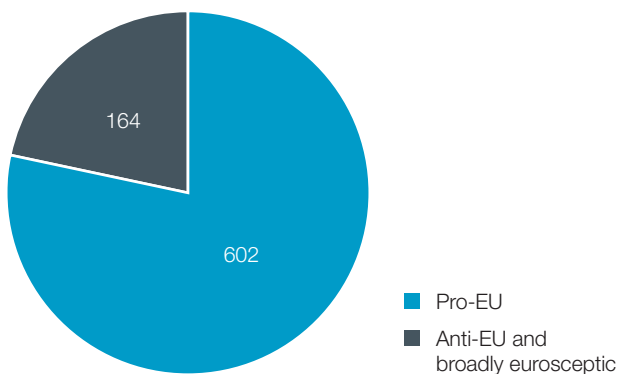
Spitzenkandidat (lead candidate) for the post of European Commission President. MEPs are likely to push hard for EU leaders to select their chosen candidate.

From August to October, the focus will shift to Members States' nominations for members of the next College of Commissioners, due to take over from the current College on 1 November 2014.

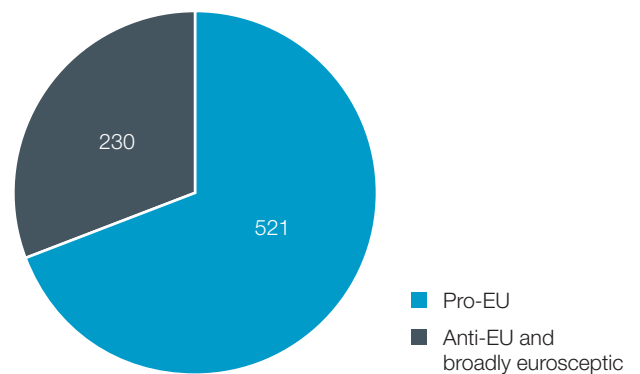
The final two key posts to be determined in 2014 are the President of the European Council and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, both of whom will assume office on 1 December 2014.

How much of a political earthquake was 2014?

2009 European Parliament



2014 European Parliament



Forming a political group

Minimum number of MEPs = 25

Minimum number of Member States = 7

Legal basis: Rule 30, Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament.

A political group in the European Parliament requires a minimum of 25 MEPs elected in at least one-quarter of the Member States, *i.e.*, seven. The groups should be formed by late June, in advance of the first plenary session starting on 1 July, and each group must inform the President of the European Parliament of its name, composition and leadership. Each MEP may only be a member of one political group.

The advantages to forming a political group include greater influence in setting the Parliamentary agenda, an allocated speaking time for debates and funds to employ a secretariat to support the work of the group.

Key political posts (President and Vice-Presidents, committee chairs and rapporteurs) are apportioned between political groups using the "D'Hondt Method". The D'Hondt Method tends to result in over-representation of larger groups, namely the centre-right EPP and the centre-left S&D.

Political groups

There were seven political groups in the outgoing Parliament:

N.B. The 2014 European Parliament has been reduced in size from 766 seats in total to 751 in line with the Lisbon Treaty.

European People's Party (EPP)



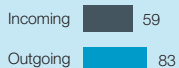
The centre-right political group. Despite suffering losses in the election, it remains the largest group within the European Parliament. No MEPs from the UK sit within the EPP following the Conservatives' withdrawal to form the ECR in 2009. It includes Member State heads of government Angela Merkel (Germany), Mariano Rajoy (Spain) and Donald Tusk (Poland) and both Herman van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, and José Manuel Barroso, the outgoing President of the European Commission. As the largest party in the European Parliament, many are pushing for its *Spitzenkandidat* (lead candidate) Jean-Claude Juncker, who wants to work towards greater integration, to succeed Barroso as President of the European Commission, however they are facing opposition from the UK and eurosceptic quarters.

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)



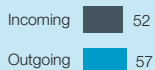
The centre-left group, which includes Member State heads of government François Hollande (France), Matteo Renzi (Italy) and Helle Thorning-Schmidt (Denmark.) Following the election, it has backed Jean-Claude Juncker to be the next President of the European Commission, rather than push for its own *Spitzenkandidat* (lead candidate) Martin Schulz, the outgoing President of the European Parliament.

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



Liberal-centrist and the political group most in favour of further EU integration. It remains the third largest group and is a strong pillar of the pro-EU majority of the European Parliament. Its candidate for the Commission Presidency was former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt.

Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)



Left of centre and mainly comprised of representatives of national Green parties, it also includes MEPs from parties representing national and regional interests and independent MEPs. It focuses on promoting environmental issues and civil and human rights.


European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)


Incoming  46

Outgoing  57

Centre-right and broadly eurosceptic, founded in 2009. The UK Conservative Party was the largest party within the ECR, but with 19 MEPs it now has the same number as Poland's Law and Justice Party. The formerly Conservative-linked Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) secured one seat; this brings the UK total to 20 MEPs. The UK will no longer be able to dominate the work of the group, however, not being able to wield a majority. This will make it unable, for example, to veto the membership of the German Alternative für Deutschland (AFD) - a move that may be unpopular with Angela Merkel, leader of the CDU.


European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)


Incoming  45

Outgoing  35

The most left-wing of the official political groups, it is comprised of members from Socialist and Communist parties. It is broadly eurosceptic.

Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (EFD)


Incoming  38

Outgoing  31

Comprised mainly of right-wing and far-right members, it is firmly eurosceptic. UKIP remains the largest party in the group.

Non-attached Members and Others

Incoming  101

Outgoing  33

60 newly-elected MEPs are not currently allied to an existing political group. Many are from anti-EU parties. In addition, there are 41 non-attached MEPs.

A key question is whether these newly-elected MEPs will join an existing group, form their own group(s), or choose to remain outside the formal group structure. At present, many are refusing to sit with one or more national party due to divergence in views on key issues including economic policy, immigration and the Eurozone. Most notably so far, Nigel Farage has stated publically that UKIP's 23 MEPs will not sit with the 24 MEPs from the French *Front National*. This could lead to four groups on the political right: the EPP, the centre-right ECR, the right-wing EFD and a new far-right party dominated by Marine Le Pen's *Front National*. No group is expected to include MEPs from the neo-Nazi Hungarian Jobbik, Greek Golden Dawn or German National Democratic Party (NPD).

Who's in, who's out?

Selected outgoing MEPs

Alexander Alvaro (ALDE Germany) – Former Vice-President of the Parliament, did not stand

Marta Andreasen (ECR UK) – Former Commission Chief Accountant

Sharon Bowles (ALDE UK) – Chaired the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) through the post-crisis legislative period, left after retiring

Martin Callanan (ECR UK) – The most prominent Conservative loss, now former leader of the ECR group

Françoise Castex (S&D France) – Vice-Chaired the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) and the author of a controversial report on private copying levies

Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE Germany) – Founded the 'Greek European Citizens' party

Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Greens/EFA France) – Co-Chair of the Greens

Dimitrios Droutsas (S&D Greece) – Rapporteur on one of the legislative dossiers on data protection

Andrew Duff (ALDE UK) – A long standing federalist in the European Parliament

James Elles (ECR UK) – Served six terms, longstanding member of the Committee on Budgets (BUDG), left after retiring

Christian Engström (Greens/EFA Sweden) – Key proponent for copyright reform

Marielle Gallo (EPP France) – Author of a report on collective management of copyright, and involved in many legislative dossiers on digital issues

Malcolm Harbour (ECR UK) – Chaired the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), left after retiring

Silvana Koch-Mehrin (ALDE Germany) – Former Vice-President of the European Parliament

Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE UK) – Likely to take up her seat in the UK House of Lords once more

Catherine Trautmann (S&D France) – High profile MEP in telecoms legislation, most recently on net neutrality

Sir Graham Watson (ALDE UK) – Served four terms, former head of the ALDE Group

Additionally, **Klaus-Heiner Lehne (EPP Germany)**, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI), stepped down in February following appointment to the European Court of Auditors

Selected incoming and returning MEPs*

Jan Philipp Albrecht (Greens/EFA) – Rapporteur for the General Data Protection Regulation, returning MEP

Pervenche Berès (S&D France) – Returning MEP

José Bové (Greens/EFA France) – Returning MEP

Richard Corbett (S&D UK) – Back as an MEP after serving as an advisor to Herman van Rompuy

Michel Dantin (EPP France) – Rapporteur on revision of the CAP

Rachida Dati (EPP France) – Former French Minister of Justice, returning MEP

Karl-Heinz Florenz (EPP Germany) – Returning MEP

Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D Germany) – Returning MEP

Sven Giegold (Greens/EFA Germany) – Returning MEP

Sylvie Goulard (S&D France) – Returning MEP

Ingeborg Gräßle (EPP Germany) – Returning MEP

Françoise Grossetete (EPP France) – Returning MEP

Hans-Olaf Henkel (AFD Germany) – Former President of the German Industry Federation, the *Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* (BDI)

Brice Hortefeux (EPP France) – Former French Minister of the Interior, returning MEP

Danuta Hubner (EPP Poland) – Former European Commissioner for Regional Policy and returning MEP

Eva Joly (Greens France) – Returning MEP

Syed Kamall (ECR UK) – Returning MEP

Othmar Karas (EPP Austria) – Rapporteur on CRDIV

Alain Lamassoure (EPP France) – Returning MEP

Marine Le Pen (Front National France) – Returning MEP, leader of the *Front National*

Janusz Lewandowski (EPP Poland) – Current European Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget

Bernd Lucke (AFD Germany) – Co-founder of Alternative für Deutschland, one of their newly elected seven MEPs

David McAllister (EPP Germany) – Prime Minister of Lower Saxony

Louis Michel (ALDE Belgium) – Former Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, former

European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, and returning MEP

Neven Mimica (S&D Croatia) – Current European Commissioner for Consumer Protection

Viviane Reding (EPP Luxembourg) – Current European Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship

Olli Rehn (ALDE Finland) – Current European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs

Maroš Šefčovič (S&D Slovakia) – Current European Commissioner for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration

Alexander Stubb (EPP Finland) – Former Finnish Foreign Affairs Minister, former MEP

Dr Kay Swinburne (ECR UK) – Returning MEP

Pavel Telička (ALDE Czech Republic) – Former European Commissioner for Transport, co-founder of BXL Consulting

Sophie in't Veld (ALDE NL) – Returning MEP

Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE Belgium) – Former Belgian Prime Minister and returning MEP, leader of the ALDE group and ALDE candidate for President of the European Commission 2014-2019

*Please note that the incoming and returning MEPs will only be finalised at the end of June

France: The ascendancy of the *Front National*

Gail Orton

For the first time in a national election, the *Front National* (FN) topped the polls in the European Parliamentary elections in France, winning almost 25% of the vote. In the process, they secured 24 of France's 74 seats. This is a significant increase from 2009, when the FN won just over six per cent of the vote and had only three MEPs, including father and daughter duo Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen. The result is all the more surprising in that the FN traditionally does less well in European elections than the Presidential election. And it comes hot on the heels of the FN's successful showing in the March municipal elections, where it had its best result since 1995.

The FN won a total of 71 out of 101 departments across France. It did well in its traditional strongholds in the north east (for example winning 38% in the Pas-de-Calais region) and south east, but it also made inroads elsewhere. The FN vote was lowest in Paris and the west of France. The party's leader, Marine Le Pen, was returned with over 32% of the

vote where she was standing in the north west of France.

The key question in relation to the FN delegation is where these MEPs will sit in the European Parliament. In the last Parliament they were unaligned, but in the run-up to the European elections, negotiations between Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders of the Dutch Freedom Party (PVV) hinted at a possible new grouping. However, the PVV had a poor showing in the Netherlands and will send only four MEPs to the European Parliament. In order to set up a new group, Marine Le Pen will need to entice at least one MEP from an additional five countries. The FN's 24 MEPs would make up by far the largest bloc of that group.

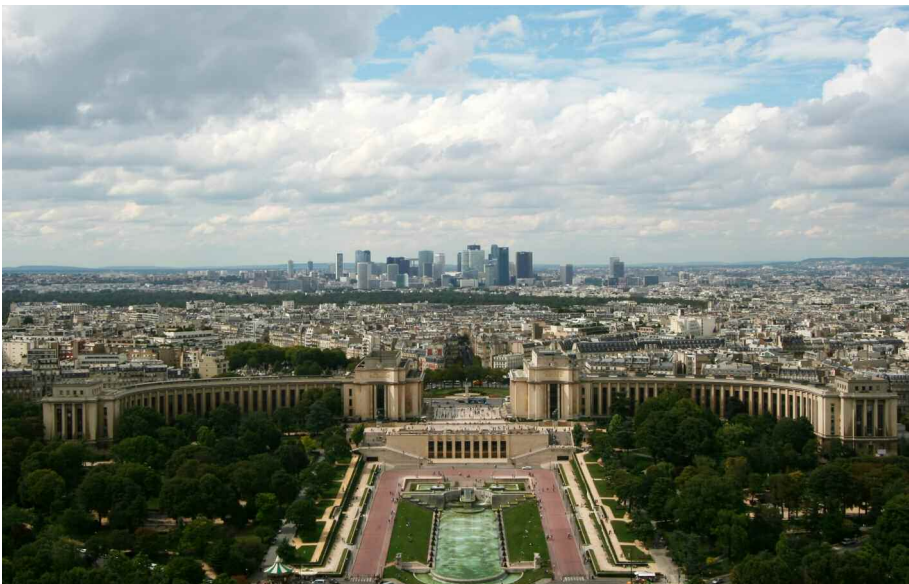
The centre right UMP came second overall with almost 21% of the vote, and it will send 20 MEPs to the EPP delegation in the European Parliament, including returning MEPs Alain Lamassoure, Michel Dantin, Rachida Dati and Françoise Grossetête.

It was another difficult election for the Socialist party of French President François Hollande, following a poor showing in the March municipal elections which led to a major government reshuffle. They lost one MEP compared to the 2009 election, which was at the time considered an extremely weak result for the party. The Socialists will send 13 MEPs to sit in the S&D group in the European Parliament, including returning MEP Pervenche Berès who will represent the Paris region. Newly instated French Prime Minister Manuel Valls acknowledged his party's "mediocre" showing and called the FN share of the vote a "seismic shock". A notable loss in the Socialist delegation is Catherine Trautmann, first elected to the European Parliament in 1989. To the surprise of many commentators, she was placed second on the Socialist list for the northeast. Number one on the list was former trade unionist for the Florange steel works, Edouard Martin, who won the only Socialist seat for the region.

Centrist parties UDI and MoDem teamed up for this election and together won almost 10% of the vote. They will send seven MEPs to the ALDE group in the European Parliament, including returning MEPs Sylvie Goulard and Jean-Marie Cavada.

Europe Ecologie Les Verts (EELV) won almost nine per cent of the vote and six seats. Eva Joly and José Bové were returned as MEPs and will sit with the Greens.

The Front de Gauche won six per cent of the vote and four seats. The media-friendly Jean-Luc Mélenchon who is active in the national political debate, will return as an MEP in the GUE/NGL group. He described the FN's share of the vote as "suffocating news".



Germany: Merkel wins, and so do Germany's first eurosceptic MEPs

Phillip Souta

Angela Merkel emerged the winner in the German European Parliamentary elections, with the CDU and their allies gaining 35.4% of the vote, or 34 of the available 96 seats. The SPD came second with 27 seats, followed by the Greens with 14, Left and AfD both on seven and the liberal FDP down from nine on three.

Despite the win, the CDU managed to put in its least successful performance since the first election for the European Parliament in 1979. The SPD managed to add four seats, as its share of the vote went up from 21% in 2009 to 27%, benefiting from the fact that Martin Schulz, the leader of the S&D in the European Parliament was that group's *Spitzenkandidat* (lead candidate) for European Commission President.

One of the big stories from a German perspective was that the new pro-EU but anti-euro party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) led by academic Bernd Lucke delivered a respectable result from a standing start. He has said that he wants to sit with the British Conservative party in the ECR group; as a strong critic of Angela Merkel, this poses a difficult question for David Cameron as to whether he should risk upsetting the Chancellor, whose support he needs.



The AfD is the closest thing that Germany has to a eurosceptic party, and has been part of a vociferous minority, often led by academics, criticising the legal basis for Germany's involvement in Eurozone bailouts. They campaigned on a platform of having weaker southern European countries leave the euro, prevent banking union and returning competencies from the EU to Member States. The AfD have ruled out working with the *Front National* in France, the Party of Freedom in the Netherlands and UKIP in the UK.

With the German Constitutional Court's abolition of the 3% threshold, Germany controversially saw its first far-right MEP elected in the form of Udo Voigt of the National Democratic Party – he won one per cent of the vote, however he came in behind the Pirate Party (1.45%) and the Human Environment Animal Protection Party (1.25%).

The turnout in Germany was higher than average at 48%, or five per cent higher than the turnout in 2009.

Greece: A protest vote calling for growth and jobs-oriented policies

Andriani Ferti

SYRIZA, a radical left political party (GUE/NGL), which became the main opposition party following the 2012 national elections, topped the European Parliament vote. SYRIZA collected 26.6% of the votes. As a result, they secured six out of Greece's 21 seats. SYRIZA had only one seat before, occupied by Kriton Arsenis, who was not re-elected to the European Parliament. Instead, incoming MEPs include Manolis Glezos, known for his participation in the World War II resistance, who also served as an MEP representing Greece's S&D party (PASOK) following the 1984 elections, and Dimitris Papadimoulis, who was also elected to the European Parliament with SYRIZA in the 2004 elections. Alexis Tsipras, the leader of SYRIZA, was the European Left party's candidate for the President of the European Commission.

New Democracy (which sits in the EPP), whose leader is Greece's current Prime Minister, Antonis Samaras, secured five seats compared to eight in the previous Parliament. Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, who has served twice as a Vice-President of the European Parliament, was not re-elected. Incoming MEPs include current and former MPs such as Manolis Kefalogiannis and Eliza Vozenberg, as well as journalists Maria Spyraiki and Giorgos Kyrtos.

Golden Dawn, the extreme right-wing neo-Nazi party, came third collecting 9.38% of the votes (compared to 6.97% in the 2012 national elections). As a result, Golden Dawn secured three seats in the European Parliament. In view of Golden Dawn's extremist views, it is



highly unlikely that they will form any sort of coalition with far-right political parties from other Member States. Golden Dawn's increased popularity is surprising, especially because the party's leader and a number of its MPs are in prison pending trial for criminal offences.

The Panhellenic Socialist Movement party (PASOK, which sits in the S&D), one of the two ruling coalition parties together with New Democracy, came fourth. PASOK now has only two seats compared to seven in the previous Parliament. One of the departing Greek socialist voices is Dimitrios Droutsas, the rapporteur responsible for the dossier concerning the processing of personal data for the purposes of crime prevention, who, alongside German MEP Jan-Philippe Albrecht, led the privacy debate in the outgoing European Parliament.

One of the big winners of the elections in Greece is a new political party that appeared on the political scene earlier this year and is known as TO POTAMI / THE RIVER. The party's leader is a Greek journalist, Stavros Theodorakis. The party secured two seats in the European Parliament (it collected 6.61% of the votes, just two per cent less than PASOK). One of the elected MEPs, Giorgos Grammatikakis, is a well-known Professor of Physics at the University of Crete, who has served twice as the Dean of the University, and is a well-respected figure in the academic community in Greece and abroad.

The remaining three seats will be occupied by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE, which sits in GUE/NGL), and AN.EL. (which sits with UKIP in the EFD), which won two and one seats respectively.

The UK: Has Nigel Farage turned British Politics upside down?

Phillip Souta

The big winners were UKIP (The UK Independence Party), led by Nigel Farage, coming first with 23 of the UK's 72 MEPs, up by 11 seats. At the other end of the spectrum, the Liberal Democrats were decimated, losing all but one of their 11 seats. Labour came second, up seven with 20 seats, and the Conservatives went down seven to 19 seats.

Have these elections turned British politics upside down? No, but they have shaken things up. Two things give the results perspective. The turnout of 34% was low compared to a general election (65% in 2010.) Also, Labour and the Conservative's combined share of the vote in 2014 actually went up compared to the European elections in 2009, from 42 to 49%, so whilst arresting, this election has not turned British politics upside down.

What, however, will the UK's largest group of MEPs do in power over the next five years? What effect will UKIP's victory have on the mainstream parties? And will they be able to win seats in the UK's general election in 2015?

First, UKIP's approach until now has been to engage much less than other parties with the European Parliament. They attended 60% of votes in plenary, giving them the worst attendance record of all the EU's 76 parties with over three MEPs from 2009 to 2014. Paul Nuttall, the recently re-elected UKIP MEP for North West England, and its deputy leader, has described committees as "useless".

Given their large number of MEPs, how they decide to approach this question will have a considerable impact on the capacity of individuals and businesses in the UK to have their interests represented in the European Union. Some in UKIP believe that it would be possible to engage with the work of committees, for example in the area of financial services, and then go on to abstain or vote against in plenary. Others however, believe that any engagement with the European Parliament legitimises the institution they want Britain to leave.

Secondly, UKIP's key message during this election campaign has been that as a member of the EU, the UK cannot control levels of European immigration into the UK. This is one of the main reasons, they argue, why the UK should withdraw from the EU. The fact that a party with this message came a strong first in the European elections in Britain, poses considerable challenges to the more established parties.

The immediate effect will be that the leader of the centre-left Labour party Ed Miliband's decision not to match the Prime Minister David Cameron's pledge to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU in 2017 will come under renewed pressure. The Prime Minister and leader of the centre-right Conservative Party David Cameron, in turn, has come under pressure to bring forward his referendum pledge to 2016. Nick Clegg, the leader of the centrist Liberal Democrats attempted to defend his position by being the only apparently pro-European party – he did not

succeed. Their poor performance may have been more to do with the fact that they were associated with an unpopular program of austerity, or that they could no longer claim to be the party of protest because they are a party of government. Regardless, the result will lead to a period of soul searching within the party.

The Conservatives have most to fear from UKIP because they continue to take more votes from them than Labour. Research shows that 51% of the UKIP vote came from previously Conservative voters, 17% from Liberal Democrats and 12% from Labour.¹

Finally, will UKIP be able to repeat their success next year at the general election? At the last European elections in 2009, UKIP won 16.5% of the vote in the UK and 13 seats. A year later, in the 2010 general election, UKIP won 3.6% of the vote but no seats in Westminster. Polling suggested that six out of ten people who voted UKIP, did so to send a message, and about half said they would stay loyal to UKIP in 2015². The battle for Nigel Farage is to keep the voters he has lost in the past.

An outside observer such as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel would be forgiven for concluding that Britain is potentially serious about the possibility of leaving the EU. It remains to be seen whether this result will reshape the face of British politics or whether it is a very large flash in the pan. The price for keeping the UK in the EU, however, may have just got a little bit higher.

¹ Geoffrey Evans and Jon Mellon, British Electoral Survey, "UKIP: Picking up lumps of old labour support?", May 2014 <http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-findings/ukip-picking-up-lumps-of-old-labour-support/#.U391LPIdV8E>

² Lord Ashcroft Polls, "UKIP's Euro-voters are now up for grabs", May 2014. <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2014/05/ukip-euro-voters-grabs-next-may/#more-6037>

Anticipated timetable

22-25 May	European Parliament elections held across the EU's 28 Member States
27 May	Member State heads of state and government and leaders of the official European political groups met separately in Brussels to discuss the Presidency of the European Commission
2 June	Official political groups convened in Brussels
26-27 June	European Council – Member States expected to put forward a candidate to be the new President of the European Commission
1-3 July	First plenary session of the new European Parliament <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ MEPs will elect the President and Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament ■ Committee membership will be established, reflecting the size of the official political groups in the European Parliament
7 July	First ordinary Committee meetings of the new European Parliament. Committee members will elect their Chairs and Vice-Chairs
14-17 July	Second plenary session of the new European Parliament – MEPs will vote on the European Council's nomination for the President of the European Commission
Mid July	Further summit of EU leaders if the European Parliament rejects the European Council's nomination for the President of the European Commission
August	Member States to put forward nominations for European Commissioners
August/September	New President-elect of the Commission to announce portfolio allocations among nominated European Commissioners
September/October	Hearings of Commissioners-designate at the European Parliament before the Parliamentary Committees in their prospective fields of responsibility. The Committees then send their evaluations to the President of the European Parliament and political group leaders. The President-elect of the Commission will then present the College of Commissioners and its programme before a plenary session of the European Parliament
20-23 October	MEPs to vote on whether to approve the new College of Commissioners. They vote on the College as a block rather than on individual members
Late October	European Council to officially appoint the new College of Commissioners
31 October	Formal end of the previous European Commission's term (may be appointed to stay on in a caretaker capacity if new College is not yet approved)
1 November	New College of Commissioners due to take office
November	Member States to elect the new President of the European Council and the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
1 December	New President of the European Council and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy due to take office

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