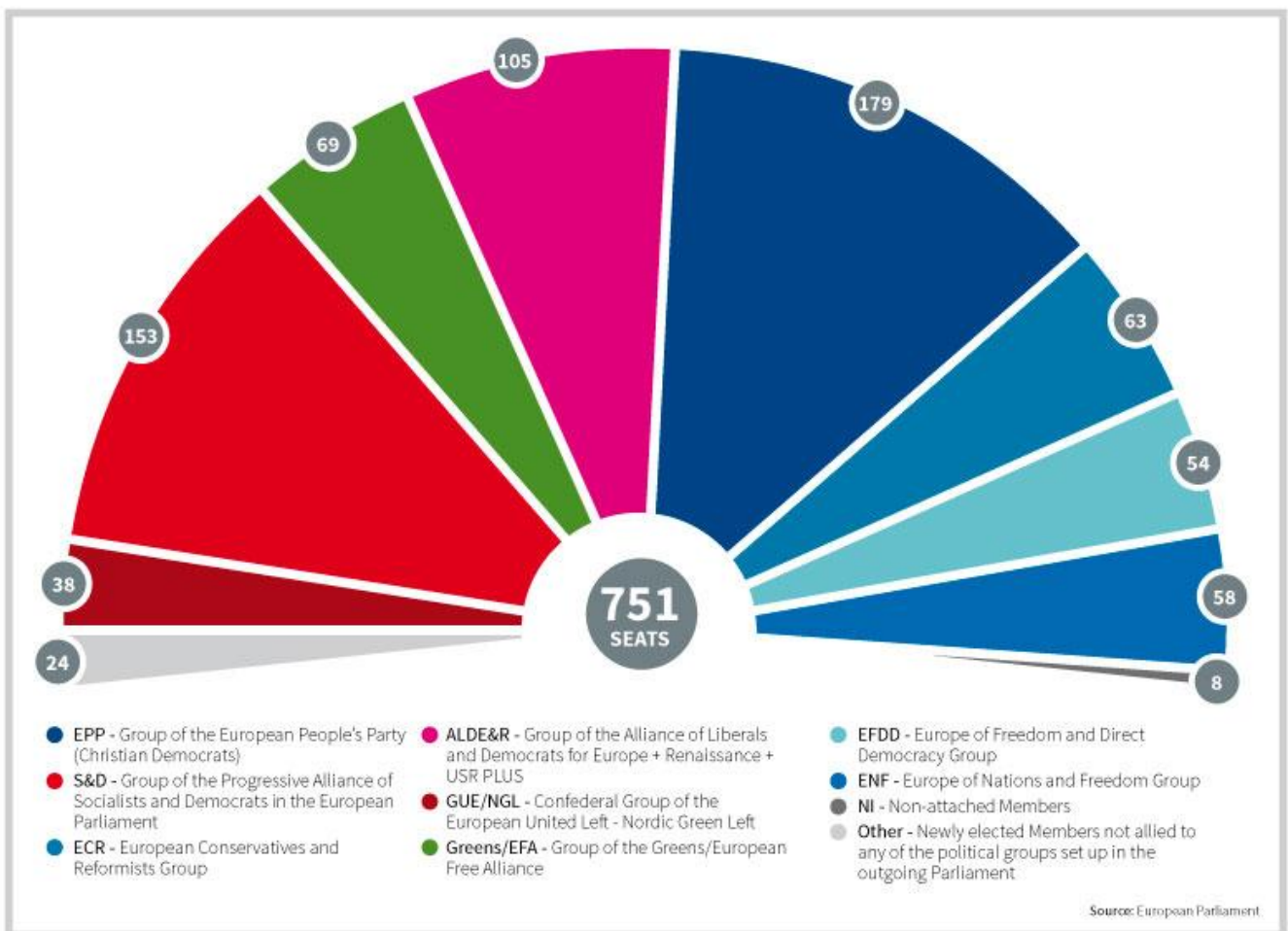


Europe elects its new Parliament and triggers the race for EU's top posts



The May 23 - 26 European Parliament elections delivered a more fragmented assembly than previously with notable increases in support for the Liberals, Greens and far-right parties which in turn saw a reduction in support for the centre-right and left.

Although the centre-right EPP and centre-left S&D groups remain the largest, they will not be able to form a so-called majority "Grand Coalition" necessitating the support of at least one other political group. While the far-right increased its presence in the Parliament, questions remain regarding their ability to work together and form a cohesive grouping. With neither centrist grouping having enough members on their own or together to form a majority, the support of Parliament's liberals will be key.

Work has now begun on negotiating the formation of the political groupings in Parliament.

The first steps in creating a far-right bloc were taken prior to the elections with the creation of the European Alliance for People and Nations (EAPN) by the Italian League led by Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, along with the extreme nationalist parties, Alternative for Germany, the Finns Party and the Danish People's Party.

Meanwhile Marine Le Pen's French National Rally, the Belgian Vlaams Belang, the Freedom Party of Austria, Slovakia's We Are Family, the Slovenian National Party and the Conservative People's Party of Estonia have declared their intention to join the EAPN group in the new Parliament. It is likely that further extreme right parties from the current Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) grouping will also seek to become members of EAPN.

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) group in the European Parliament will return in a reconstituted form, as previously explained by its group leader Guy Verhofstadt prior to the elections. The new formation is expected to join forces with French President Emmanuel Macron's La Renaissance movement as well as with the Romanian Alliance 2020 USR-PLUS.

The new Parliament will also differ from what was expected with the return of United Kingdom members. As the UK is still an EU member, it will send 73 MEPs to Brussels. The UK results again saw strong support for Nigel Farage's anti-EU, Brexit supporting message with his newly created Brexit Party, mirroring his 2014 victory with the UK Independence Party, to win 29 MEP seats. However, pro-Remain parties won 39% of all votes cast which saw the Liberal Democrats increase their seat tally from one to 16 while the British Green Party saw their numbers rise to seven, from four in 2014.

Post-election, EU heads of state and government met for an informal dinner on May 28 to review the outcome and discuss the nomination process of replacing the heads of the EU main institutions: European Council, European Commission, European Parliament, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the European Central Bank.

If EU leaders follow the advice of outgoing European Council President Donald Tusk, the initial meeting will be followed by further consultations throughout early June with decisions on the top posts pencilled in for the June 20-21 European Council Summit.

Find out More: Our Dods EU Monitoring team have produced a report on the unfinished business of the 8th legislature. To download this free report, click [here](#) [1].



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