

6 - 8 May 2024

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I. Political and Policy Developments

1. Liberals and socialists reject potential alliance with ECR

European liberals and socialists have renewed their opposition to any post-elections alliance between the EPP and the right-wing ECR.

On 6 May, Renew Europe's leader Valérie Hayer stated that her group would only support a second von der Leyen term if the ECR was excluded from negotiations.

Hayer's comment comes on the back of a [political declaration](#) signed by the Party of European Socialists (PES) on 4 May, urging "all democratic European parties" to take a strong stance against any "normalisation, cooperation or alliance with the far-right." The PES declaration was signed by heavyweights such as Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and former Green Deal chief Frans Timmermans.

2. High-level panel discusses the future of the Green Deal

On 7 May, the research network GreenDeal-Net hosted a [roundtable discussion](#) on the future of the Green Deal, featuring high-level speakers including Diederik Samsom, Head of Cabinet of former Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans; Yan Dupas, Team Leader for the Greens group in the European Parliament; and Anaïs Berthier, the Brussels head of NGO ClientEarth.

There was consensus among panellists that the rise of right-wing parties is unlikely to significantly alter the current pro-EU majority in the European Parliament. However, both Dupas and Samsom believe that climate policy will not be a priority for the next Commission.

Dupas warned about the risks of dismantling key pieces of green legislation, highlighting a push from the EPP to reopen negotiations on key files. Samsom echoed these concerns, stating that while the EPP had supported flagship climate and energy legislation, they had moved "in the wrong direction" when it comes to biodiversity. Samsom linked the rise of right

wing parties to voters' anxiety around radical changes, and stated that the Commission had failed to communicate the benefits of climate adaptation to the wider public.

Berthier noted that the rising influence of right-wing parties has already derailed the course of key files, referring to the last-minute changes introduced in the Due Diligence Directive, and regretted that other proposals such as the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation and the REACH revision had been dropped. Berthier also criticised the fear-mongering campaigns conducted by certain lobbies and governments against the Green Deal.

3. German conservatives leading polls, far-right and centre-left battle for second place

The main German political parties have completed their candidate selections and launched their campaigns. The lists by the centre-right CDU and CSU, led by Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen and EPP boss Manfred Weber, include prominent figures like EP Vice President Rainer Wieland, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee David McAllister and Chair of the Agriculture Committee Norbert Lins. Both parties have shifted towards a more conservative stance compared to 2019, prioritising security and adopting stricter positions on migration to appeal to conservative voters.

Currently, the centre-right holds a comfortable lead in the polls with 30%. Following behind is the far-right AfD, currently in second place at 18%, despite recent criticism directed at their two lead candidates, Maximilian Krah and Petr Bystron, regarding their alleged connections to Russia and China. This is compounded by a physical assault from right-wing extremists on outgoing SPD MEP Mathias Ecke.

The SPD is polling third at 16%. Heading their list is EP Vice President Katarina Barley, a senior politician who previously held ministerial positions in justice, labour, and family affairs before transitioning to the EP. A strong performance by the SPD would strengthen the party's influence within the federal government, particularly as its coalition partners, the Greens and the liberal FDP, are polling at 13% and 5% respectively.

4. Le Pen leads polls in France as parties pick candidates

Most French political parties have unveiled their candidates for the upcoming EU elections. Valérie Hayer, a centrist MEP and daughter of farmers, will lead Macron's Renaissance party, while Jordan Bardella, another outgoing MEP, will head Le Pen's National Rally (RN).

Renaissance's list, which features many outgoing MEPs, places strong emphasis on foreign policy and environmental concerns. The list includes MEP Bernard Guetta, a respected foreign policy expert, and MEP Pascal Canfin, the current chair of the Environmental Committee.

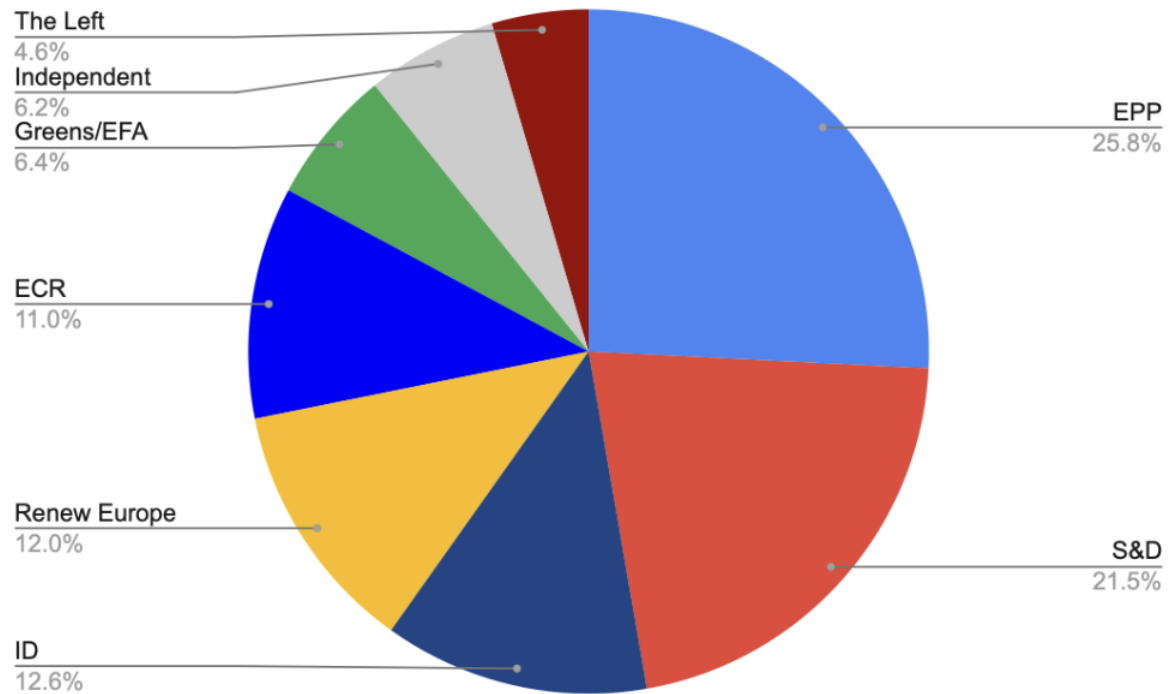
The RN's lineup places the onus on civil society and features prominent figures such as immigration critic Malika Sorel and former Head of Frontex Fabrice Leggeri.

The RN comfortably leads the polls at 31%, well ahead of Renaissance at 16%. Raphaël Glucksmann's Socialist Party (PS) is on the rise, currently polling in third place at 13%.

A strong showing by the RN and the PS would have deep implications for the French political landscape, dealing a severe blow to Macron's centrist bloc and reviving the traditional right-

left divide. It would also position the PS as a credible alternative to the far-left France Unbowed (LFI), which currently leads the left-wing opposition in France, but is polling at only 7%.

II. Latest Projections



1. **European People's Party (EPP):** 174 seats
2. **Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D):** 145 seats
3. **Identity and Democracy (ID):** 85 seats
4. **Renew Europe:** 81 seats
5. **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR):** 74 seats
6. **Greens – European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA):** 43 seats
7. **Independent:** 42 seats
8. **The Left (GUE/NGL):** 31 seats

Source: [Politico](#) (6/5/2024).

III. Key institutional milestones

Date	Event
6-9 June	EU elections
17 June	European Council on 2024-2029 strategic agenda / top jobs appointments
27-28 June	European Council on top jobs appointments
1 July	Beginning of Hungarian Presidency
16-19 July	European Parliament first plenary session
22-25 July	Formation of European Parliament committees
16-19 September (exp)	European Parliament vote on Commission President
October-November	European Commissioner-candidates hearings
1 December	New European Council President takes office
16-19 December (exp)	European Parliament vote on the new Commission