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I. Political and Policy Developments

1. **Le Pen trying to form right-wing supergroup; von der Leyen under pressure over ties with Meloni**

Following weeks of speculation around a potential right-wing alliance in the next mandate, French far-right leader Marine Le Pen took the initiative this week and invited Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to form a right-wing supergroup in the next European Parliament (EP). Similar calls came from Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Romania's AUR vice-president Adrian Axinia. Based on current polls, a right-wing coalition could secure over 180 seats, challenging the European People's Party (EPP) for first place.

While the benefits of a larger group, such as more budget, speaking time, and top EP positions, are attractive, a formal alliance of right-wing parties would face significant challenges, given deep divisions across parties on key issues like Ukraine. Meloni is currently keeping her options open, as joining a right-wing alliance would likely reduce her influence in top job negotiations and in shaping the agenda of the next Commission.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, while open to working with Meloni, rejects an alliance with Le Pen. She has been facing warnings from her coalition partners, Renew and S&D, over a potential alliance with the far-right. Moreover, prominent figures from the German government have hinted that Berlin could withdraw her nomination in favour of German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, or back Mario Draghi for the Commission President post.

von der Leyen is also facing challenges from within her political group. The French LR party is opposing her re-appointment, and other EPP national delegations (such as Italian and Slovenian delegations) might follow suit.

2. **France and Germany set out joint priorities**

On May 29, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz signed the declaration "[A New Agenda to Boost Competitiveness and Growth in the European Union](#)".

Key points from the declaration include:

- Importance of advancing the Green Deal while maintaining economic momentum, addressing pollution, and protecting biodiversity.
- Completing the Capitals Market Union, reducing Single Market barriers, and developing a Bureaucracy Reduction Action Plan, especially critical for agriculture.
- Focus pan-European investments to drive innovation in quantum computing, AI, and robotics.
- A Critical Medicines Act to boost EU sovereignty and a "European research plan" for cancer and other diseases.

The declaration is meaningful as it outlines shared French and German views on the future EU policy priorities, with a view to the adoption of the European Council Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029.

Reports suggest that the latest draft of the Strategic Agenda continues to prioritise competitiveness over climate, despite slight changes to the wording of the document. Most notably, the updated draft scraps the mention of a "vibrant agriculture sector", instead stressing the need for a "competitive, sustainable and resilient agriculture sector."

3. European Socialists want more Commission seats

Nicolas Schmit, the Party of European Socialists (PES) lead candidate, stated the composition of the next Commission should reflect election results, with more than "two or three" socialist commissioners if PES finishes first or second. Currently, only Spain, Denmark and Malta plan to appoint socialist commissioners.

Schmit also mentioned it would be "logical" for him to be appointed vice-president if he fails to become the next Commission President. However, Luxembourg's centre-right government backs MP Christophe Hansen for commissioner, casting doubt on Schmit's future.

4. Hungary could get weak portfolio; Malta struggling to find new commissioner candidate

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is reportedly trying to keep Hungary in charge of the EU enlargement portfolio. According to media reports, he is however unlikely to succeed - the Orbán government has irritated many member states over the course of this mandate, and capitals might choose to punish Budapest by allocating a weak portfolio to the next Hungarian commissioner.

The Maltese government is still considering options over the next commissioner candidate. Former Deputy Prime Minister Chris Fearne has not ruled out re-entering the race if he is cleared of fraud and misappropriation charges. Former Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and Foreign Minister Ian Borg are potential alternatives, but are also tainted by scandals. Energy Minister Miriam Dalli denied suggestions she was considering the position.

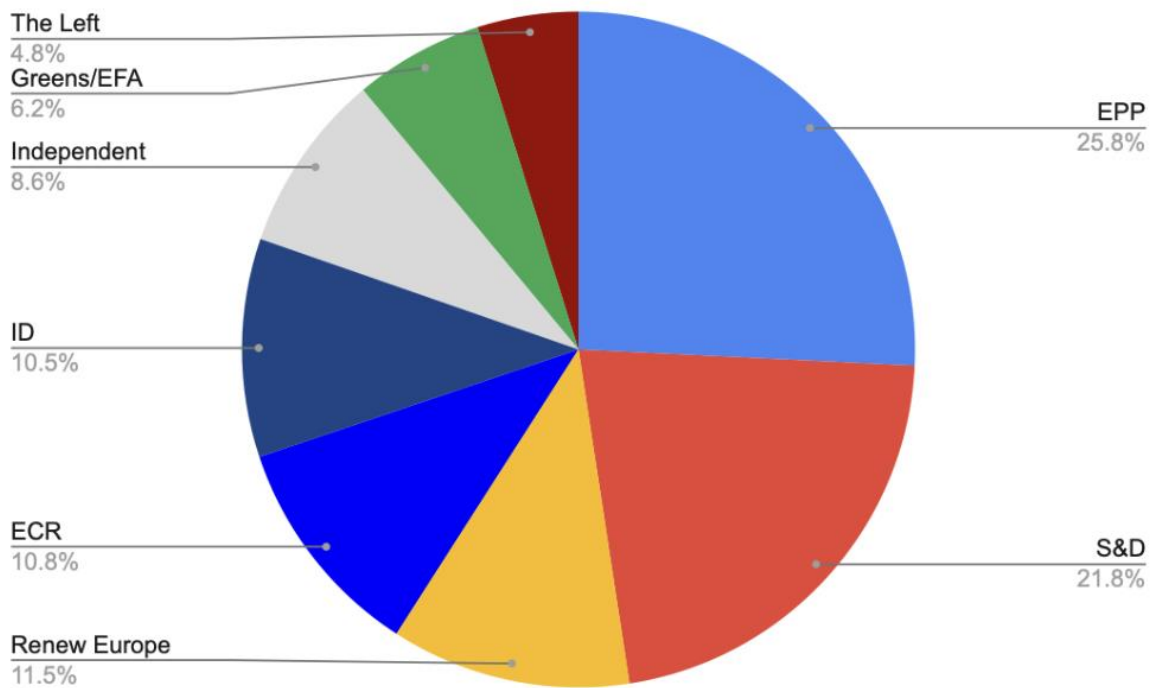
5. Dutch coalition parties tap former security chief as next PM; Lithuania's Nauseda reelected as president

On May 28, Dutch right-wing coalition parties nominated Dick Schoof, Secretary-General at the Ministry of Justice and Security, as the next Prime Minister. Schoof, originally from the Labour Party, promised to be an inclusive prime minister. Schoof has previously led the AIVD domestic security service, the counter-terrorism agency, and the immigration service. He will now work on assembling a ministerial cabinet together with Richard van Zwol, the civil servant who led talks on government formation.

Lithuania's incumbent President Gitanas Nauseda won the presidential election with 74% of the vote, defeating Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė. Nauseda's reelection comes amid growing security concerns following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He pledged continued support for Ukraine, strengthening Lithuania's security, and active foreign policy with the EU.

II. Latest Projections

Projections for the ID group dropped after AfD's expulsion, relegating the group to fifth position, behind Renew and ECR.



1. **European People's Party (EPP):** 170 seats
2. **Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D):** 144 seats
3. **Renew Europe:** 76 seats
4. **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR):** 75 seats
5. **Identity and Democracy (ID):** 69 seats
6. **Independent:** 57 seats
7. **Greens – European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA):** 41 seats



8. **The Left (GUE/NGL):** 32 seats

Source: [Politico](#) (29/5/2024).

III. Key institutional milestones

Date	Event
6-9 June	EU elections
17 June	Informal European Council
27-28 June	European Council on 2024-2029 Strategic Agenda and 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