

In Focus

European Parliament elections 2014

Benjamin D. Hennig, Dimitris Ballas and Danny Dorling map the results of May's elections across the continent.

In May 2014 the citizens of the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) went to the polls to elect 751 new Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). These maps present the geographical distribution of this vote across member states. All countries in these maps are shaded using a rainbow colour scheme, starting with shades of red to demarcate the countries with the most recent association with the EU and moving through to violet for the oldest member states.

All nationals of EU member states are entitled to vote in the country of their residence or the country of their citizenship if this is different (but not both). The voter turnout across the EU was 43 per cent. Belgium and Luxembourg have the highest rate of voter participation (90 per cent). On the other hand, the smallest voter turnout is observed in Slovakia (13 per cent) and the Czech Republic (19.5 per cent), whereas the United Kingdom had the 11th lowest rate in Europe (36 per cent).

The distribution of seats in the European Parliament is not directly proportional to each country's total population. A so-called 'degressive proportionality' principle gives small countries a few more seats than would otherwise have been the case if strict proportionality were applied. More than 90 per cent of all elected MEPs belong to one of the seven political groups of the European Parliament. There is a minimum of 25 members needed to form a political group and at least one quarter of all member states must be represented within this group.

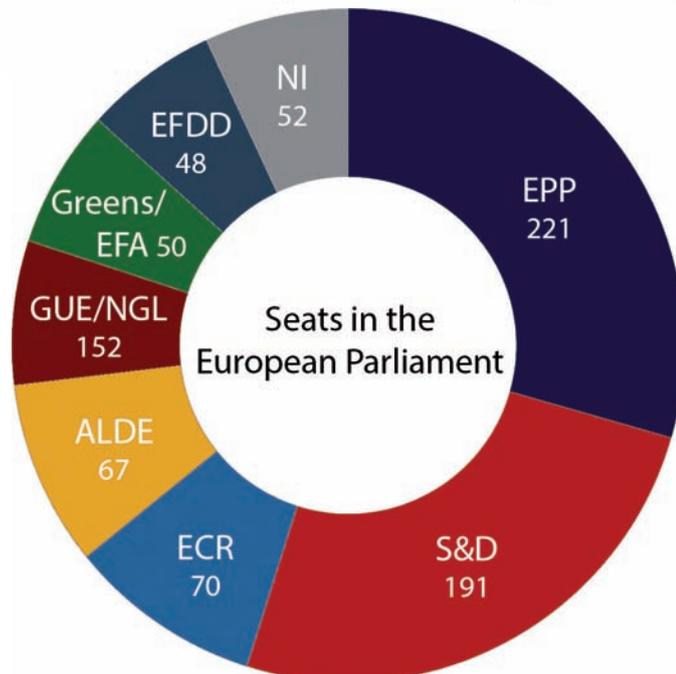
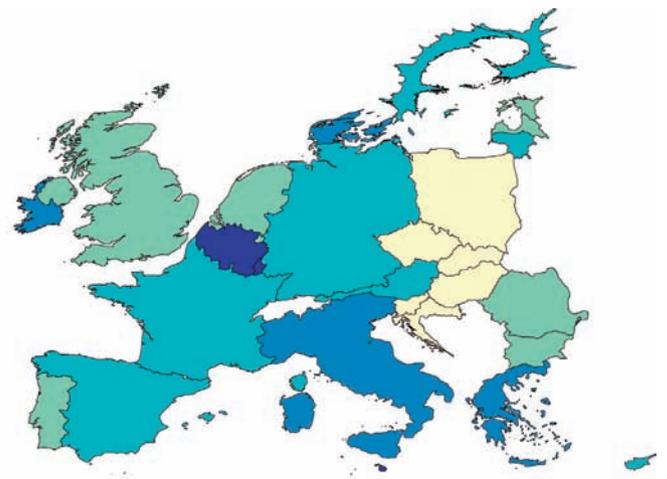
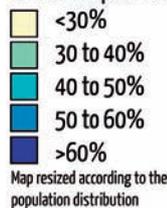
The largest political group is the European People's Party (EPP). No MEPs from the UK belong to EPP, although the Conservative Party was formerly a member. The second largest group is the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. This is the political

group to which Labour belongs. The European Conservatives and Reformists is the third largest group and is the Tories' current political grouping.

The next largest group is the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats, to which the Lib

Dems is aligned. The fifth largest group is the European United Left/Nordic Green Left; its one UK MEP is a Sinn Fein representative from Northern Ireland. The Greens/European Free Alliance is the sixth largest group in the European Parliament. The UK has six MEPs

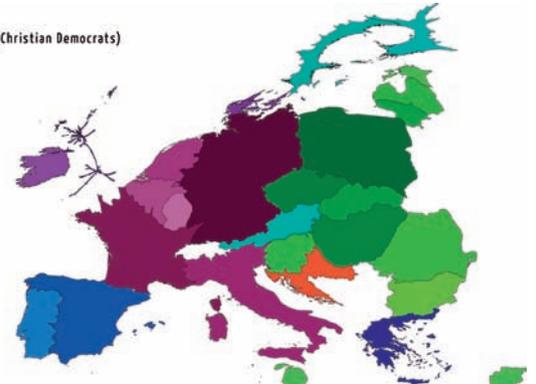
Turnout at the 2014 elections to the European Parliament



EFDD
 Europe of freedom and direct democracy
 Seats: 48 (6.39% of the votes)



EPP
 Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
 Seats: 221 (29.43% of the votes)



belonging to the Greens/European Free Alliance: three from the Green Party, two from the Scottish National Party and one from Plaid Cymru. The smallest group in the European Parliament is the so-called 'Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy', with half of its seats won by the UK Independence Party. Finally, there is one UK MEP that does not belong to any group, Diane Dodds of the Democratic Unionist Party.

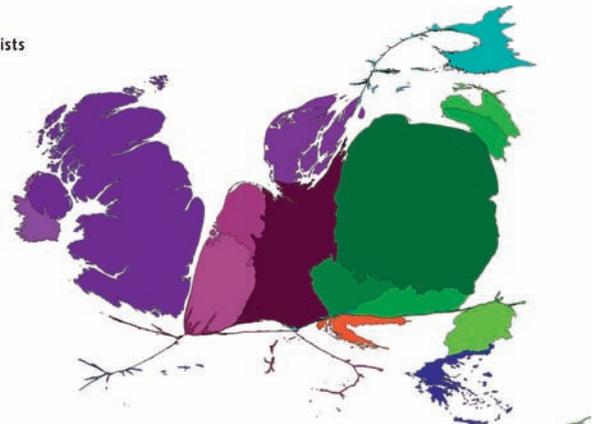
Reporting of the European election results naturally focused on changes since the last election, particularly the growing vote for Eurosceptic parties in many countries. However, it is also useful to look again at how political parties in Europe have now come to be arranged. Although they are the largest group, the parties belonging to EPP, the group of the right, barely hold more than a quarter of all seats. The socialist parties combined with the Greens are a far larger combination. The Liberals are a very small group in Europe, much smaller than the group of what in European terms count of as the extreme parties of the right, including the UK Conservative party and UKIP. Europe both encompasses a wider politics than is seen in any individual country of the union, and a more complex one.

These maps are based in part on recent work included in *The Social Atlas of Europe* (Policy Press, 2014)

S&D
 Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
 Seats: 191 (25.43% of the votes)



ECR
 European Conservatives and Reformists
 Seats: 70 (9.32% of the votes)



ALDE
 Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
 Seats: 67 (8.92% of the votes)



■ Benjamin D. Hennig (@geoviews) is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford.

■ Dimitris Ballas (@Dimitris_Ballas) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography at the University of Sheffield.

■ Danny Dorling (@dannydorling) is a Professor of Human Geography at the University of Oxford.