

Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin, Faces on divides: The May 2014 European elections

Caption: In the run-up to the May 2014 European elections, Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin draw up a study that is published by 'Notre Europe' in April 2014. The aim of this study is to raise public awareness of the major political and partisan issues involved in the European elections.

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FACES ON DIVIDES

THE MAY 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin

Foreword by Julian Priestley

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“EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTES THAT SHAPED EU AND NATIONAL POLITICS 2009-2014”

VoteWatch Europe and *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute* have initiated the project “European Parliament votes that shaped EU and national politics 2009-2014”. The objective of this project is to raise public awareness of the political and partisan issues of the European elections of 22-25 May 2014.

With this in mind, they have established a partnership with the think tanks and research institutes from some 20 EU countries (*see list below*) in order to analyse the impact of EU policy issues on national policies over the past five years, by adapting these analyses to the people in the countries concerned.

This project focuses in particular on the analysis of a series of 15 key votes identified by all partners (with the possibility of adding 5 additional votes per country) as well as points of analysis specific to the partners involved (publication and event format).

An open conference organised in Brussels on 19 March 2014 was an opportunity to present the initial results of this project, and an overall summary will be drafted and circulated by VoteWatch Europe and *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute* before the 22-25 May next.

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List of partners of the project led by VoteWatch Europe and *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*:

- Austria:** Institute of Advanced Studies, Department of Political Science
Belgium: Egmont-Royal Institute for International Relations
Bulgaria: Centre for Liberal Strategies
Cyprus: Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs
Denmark: Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)
Finland: Finnish Institute of International Affairs
France: Robert Schuman Foundation
Germany: German Institute for International and Security Affairs
Greece: Diktio Network for Reform in Greece and Europe
Ireland: European Movement Ireland
Italy: Institute of International Affairs & Centre for Studies on Federalism
Latvia: Centre for Public Policy (PROVIDUS°)
Lithuania: Institute of International Relations and Political Sciences
Luxembourg: Robert Schuman Centre of European Studies and Research
Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael
Poland: Institute for Public Affairs
Romania: European Institute of Romania
Spain: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB)
Sweden: Swedish Institute of European Policy Studies (SIEPS)
United Kingdom: Policy Network

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FOREWORD

by Julian Priestley

The European elections that will take place from 22-25 May next are an important democratic event for the European citizens that we are, and as such, they need to be approached with as much background information as possible.

In this respect, having been Secretary-General of the European Parliament placed me in a paradoxical situation. I had to participate in a very direct manner in the functioning of this great institution and observe the way in which its members organised themselves to form majorities during the voting process. At the same time, I was constantly able to measure the lack of familiarity, and sometimes understanding, of my fellow EU citizens vis-à-vis the coalition logic at work within the EP and the decisions resulting from it.

Against this backdrop, I believe it is particularly welcome that such a study is published, as part of a pan-European partnership between VoteWatch Europe and *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*, which was also joined by the Robert Schuman Foundation for France.

For several years now, VoteWatch Europe has endeavoured to produce benchmark information on how MEPs vote on the important issues that are put to them. It thus provides crucial information for the citizens electing these MEPs, and this information should be circulated as broadly as possible (see www.votewatcheurope.eu). Since its creation, *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute* has also made efforts towards more democratic functioning of the EU, particularly based on strengthening the role of parties working at EU level, and that make up the “missing link”^{*} of European political life.

* Julian Priestley, “*European political parties: the missing link*”, *Policy Paper No. 41*, *Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*, October 2010.

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It was therefore totally natural that they would work together to mobilise the think tanks of some 20 EU countries around a project aimed at clearly elucidating how the MEPS voted in relation to their partisan beliefs, for the symbolic votes of the 2009-2014 parliamentary term. Just as it was natural that the Robert Schuman Foundation fully participate in this partnership concerning the votes of French MEPs, given the priority that it has given also to these issues for many years.

The result of this partnership is this study, co-written by Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin. It contains several extremely enlightening elements of information and analysis for citizens living in France and invited to vote on 25 May next.

The first part of the study firstly recalls the extent of powers exercised by the EP, the importance of the political issues on which its members are requested to decide, but also the key role played by the political groups established within this institution. It usefully recalls that the proportional representation system in place during European elections allows a good representation of parties that are much less present in national parliaments, while at the same time preventing a single political group from holding the majority alone - hence the need to form majority coalitions.

The second part of this study presents the “variable-geometry majorities” that form within the EP, in relation to the issues put to the vote of the MEPs: “consensus majorities” which include European MEPs from almost all parties with elected representatives, accounting for approximately 40% of the votes; “grand-coalition majorities”, which include MEPs from centrist political groups, namely, Conservatives from the EPP, Socialists and Democrats, as well as Liberals (around 30% of votes); lastly, “confrontation majorities”, which include centre-left or centre-right parties (also around 30% of votes). The 21 votes analysed by this study illustrate how such “majorities of ideas” can be formed in relation to particular issues, based on negotiations between the main political groups in the EP. It is particularly useful that it be published in a country such as France, which, just like the United Kingdom, is characterised by a political culture that is much more binary, marked by an almost systematic and therefore simplistic opposition between the majority and the opposition.

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Lastly, the third part of this study provides highly informative elements on the impact of the vote of 25 May next, based on available opinion polls. It confirms that no political group will be able to take the majority of seats alone, and that majority coalitions will therefore continue to be formed. It also explains that the EPP and S&D groups should be in a leading position and that today it is difficult to predict which of the two will take the lead. The fact that both of these groups will maintain a certain preeminence, consistent with the wishes of the majority of Europeans, should not however lead readers to underestimate the importance of their vote. Majority coalitions at work within the next EP will not make decisions of the same nature according to the identity of the largest group and the exact balance of power that will be determined on the evening of 25 May.

My wish, therefore, is that the greatest number of people will read this study so that they can make the most informed decision possible ahead of the great electoral event this May 2014.

Julian Priestley
Member of the Board of Directors of VoteWatch Europe
Member of the Board of Directors of Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European elections of 22-25 May 2014 will lead to the election of 751 MEPs (74 of them from France), called on to represent some 507 million Europeans. They represent a major democratic event for European citizens, and will be centred around three series of political issues.

1. MEPs exercising their powers within a partisan framework

- European citizens are called on to directly choose the people who will embody the EU within the EP until 2019; they can also influence the choice of the next President of the Commission and the distribution of responsibilities within the College of Commissioners (*pages 14 to 24*).
- The MEPs elected in May 2014 will have substantial decision-making powers (90% of EU legislative powers), powers that the current MEPs have used extensively. They will have to define the EU's contribution to resolving the crisis, the evolution of the EU's basic values (euro, free movement, etc.) and the nature of its international interventions (trade, Russia, etc.) (*pages 24 to 38*).
- The new MEPs are called on to join the 7 or 8 political groups (Christian-Democrats, Liberals, Socialists, Greens, Radical Left, etc.) that structure EP functioning and the content of its decisions, based on a logic of compromise (*pages 38 to 46*).

2. MEPs forming variable-geometry majorities

Since MEPs do not have to support a government, they can form three types of “variable-geometry majorities”, which is insightful to analyse by presenting the votes cast by the French and European MEPs on about 20 key issues:

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- “Consensus majorities” (almost 40% of votes analysed by VoteWatch Europe) including MEPs from most political groups, including the French FN and Front de gauche, on issues such as GMOs or the Financial Transaction Tax (*pages 47 to 60*).
- “Grand-coalition majorities” (almost 30% of votes analysed by VoteWatch Europe) mainly including MEPs from the EPP (UMP and centrists) and S&D (PS) groups, on relatively diverse issues such as the banking union, EU budget and reform of the CAP (*pages 60 to 71*).
- “Confrontation majorities” (almost 30% of votes analysed by VoteWatch Europe) opposing MEPs from centre-right and centre-left coalitions, especially on economic, social and environmental issues such as transatlantic trade negotiations, the extension of maternity leave or the taxation of activities that pollute (*pages 71 to 80*).

3. New political balance of power between the future MEPs

- The balance of power in the new EP will be largely determined by the results of the eight countries with the highest populations in the EU (or “Swing states”) as well as through the relative evolution in scores in relation to 2009 (*pages 81 to 85*).
- Opinion polls carried out for the past six months indicate that the EPP and S&D groups are significantly ahead (a little over 200 seats apiece), but also point to a particularly unpredictable tussle to decide which of the two groups will lead, with EPP losing ground and S&D gaining it (*pages 85 to 87*).
- Liberals and radical left could vie for third place, while Europhobic right and far-right formations should see a sharp increase in terms of seats, without however occupying a central place within the EP (*pages 87 to 89*).
- The balance of power between national delegations is set to evolve within the main political groups: for example, the British could become the largest delegation within the S&D group, the Poles the largest within the ECR

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group, whereas the French delegations within the EPP, S&D and Green groups are set to see a loss of influence (*pages 89 to 94*).

- A grand right-left coalition could occur for the nomination of the President of the Commission and its members, whereas variable-geometry coalitions with a more left-wing influence is set to form for all votes cast during the 2014-2019 period (*pages 94 to 97*).

It is ultimately the vote of Europeans that will determine the partisan balance of power, on the basis of which the content of EP's legislative and budgetary decisions will be defined, from 25 May 2014 onwards for the five years to come.

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANT DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS

The European elections of 22-25 May 2014 will lead to the election of 751 MEPs, called on to represent some 507 million inhabitants of the European Union (EU) within the European Parliament (EP) in Strasbourg. This important democratic event, calls on some 382 million voters from the 28 EU member states and is then unparalleled at international level. The fact that it is taking place in a context of crisis, makes it all the more important, from an economic and social standpoint, but also a political standpoint, as the EU has been at the heart of numerous controversies and public debates for several years.

Such a context of crisis should encourage the voters that we are to take full advantage of the opportunity we are being given to make our voices heard, whether to show our support for or rejection of a particular EU direction and policy, or concerning its way of operating. In any case, it should not make us forget that the main thing is to choose our Members of Parliament (MEPs) next May, elected representatives who will be called on to exercise substantial powers and make important decisions for Europeans over the coming five years, as underpinned in the first part of this study.

Electing MEPs by universal suffrage is the very unique opportunity to directly choose the women and men who will act in the name of the EU, after a campaign that has placed particular emphasis on its performance and its future prospects. The members of the European Council, who play a key role at Community level, are in fact appointed at the end of national elections, during which the EU is often a topic among many others, even though questions linked to the euro area crisis have often been raised in recent times. The ministers serving in the Council exercise this role by virtue of their membership of the government of their country, where they were appointed (and not elected) for reasons that are often unrelated to European issues. Concerning members of the European Central Bank and the European Court of Justice, they are also

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appointed by member states, and not elected (this is not the case anywhere else in the world).

It is therefore by electing the MEPs that we can directly access the heart of the EU's decision-making process and at the same time influence the appointment of the European Commission President and the members of his or her team, who must receive a majority of votes in the European Parliament in order to be invested in their mission. One of the striking novelties of the May 2014 elections is that they have led to a campaign in which the main European political parties have appointed candidates for President of the Commission that voters are invited to select. It is therefore now easier for us to put faces on the divides that structure EU political and partisan life. This should also be an additional reason not to miss this important democratic event, whose outcome will determine the content of the EP decisions on the thousands of votes to take place until 2019.

The current context of crisis raises concerns on the two issues that the "European elections" traditionally have to face, namely, the low voter turnout and the significant scores of protest parties, known in this case as "populists"¹.

As in 2009, the May 2014 elections will be of a "federal" nature as they will lead to the election of political leaders acting on behalf of the "Federation of nation states" that is the EU, in the words of Jacques Delors. On this basis, the elections will lead to the appointment of the MEPs who will contribute to the exercise of substantial powers granted to the EU by its member states and its citizens, for example with regard to trade, in the agricultural and environmental areas and concerning economic and budgetary issues. The upcoming European elections will not have any substantial direct impact however on the powers that the member states retain in areas that are important for citizens such as education, housing, taxation, social protection, law and order, etc. One could naturally wish that the rate of participation in the European elections would stop declining, in direct opposition to the continuous enhancement of the jurisdictions and powers of MEPs; but, in a European Union ruled by the principle of subsidiarity, it is not incoherent that this rate of participation is in

1. On these issues, see for example, Yves Bertoncini, "European elections: less abstention, more populism?", *Tribune, Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute*, November 2013.

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line with that observed in other federal elections, for example in the United States and in Switzerland².

Because they are also “intermediate, second order elections”, often partially centred around national issues, the May 2014 European elections should also allow protest votes to be expressed in many member states. This is highly likely given that the image and the popularity of the EU have deteriorated in recent years, against the backdrop of the euro area crisis. While it is true that distrust of the EU is not as strong as what almost all Europeans feel for their national authorities, the political expression of this should be significant in the upcoming elections and centre around national as well as Community issues. This distrust should benefit very dissimilar partisan political groups, but the common feature is the rejection to a greater or lesser extent of their country’s membership of the EU or the euro area and/or the way in which the Community political system functions³.

In this context, one of the stakes of the upcoming May 2014 European elections is to determine the extent of progression of these rather anti-European partisan political groups, even if they seem to be far from obtaining a majority of seats or becoming the main political group of the EP, as we shall see in the third part of this study. Another issue of the European elections is that of determining whether the political groups who traditionally are more favourable to European integration will in turn take up the anti-EU diatribes, or if they will be able to offer voters an alternative and constructive vision of crisis recovery and Community policies. But the main and central issue at stake in the May 2014 elections nevertheless remains that of determining the balance of power that will be established between the various pro-European partisan political groups and in particular the conservatives of the “European People’s Party” and the “Socialists and Democrats”. It is in fact in relation to this balance of power, which today seems uncertain, that the exact content of European Parliament decisions will be determined over the next five years.

2. Voter turnout in Swiss federal elections has varied from between 42% and 49% since 1979. In the same period, voter turnout in US federal elections varied between less than 40% and 56.8%. Voter turnout in European elections was 43% in 2009 and 45.7 % in 2004.

3. On this subject, see Yves Surel, “The European Union and the challenges of populism”, *Policy Brief No. 17*, Notre Europe, June 2011.

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It is for this reason that the second part of this study presents a detailed analysis of the way in which the partisan divisions have been expressed within the Strasbourg hemicycle all throughout the parliamentary term that is coming to an end, including at the time of the 21 symbolic votes on such diverse issues as the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, transatlantic trade negotiations, the extension of maternity leave or the cultivation of GMOs. Such an analysis in fact allows better understanding of how the partisan political groups represented within the European Parliament have managed to forge majorities in relation to the issues being dealt with, on the basis of three main categories: consensus majorities, bringing together elected representatives from most political groups, including “anti-European”; grand-coalition majorities, based on compromises struck between conservatives and social democrats, with the backup of the liberals or even other political groups; confrontation majorities, that reflect the victory of centre-left or centre-right majorities.

As we shall see, the coexistence of these variable-geometry majorities is common within the European Parliament, whose members do not systematically have to support a “government” and can therefore form idea-based majorities. This is at work in several EU member states, where they are being practiced at national or regional level. But it is much less common in countries such as France, which functions on the basis of a binary political logic, and in which a single Parliament vote that does not comply with the wishes of the government sometimes seems likely to lead to a political crisis. In this context, it seems particularly important to present what were some of the main votes of French MEPs elected from 2009 to 2014, not only in order to finally put faces on the divides that structured their votes, but also to better elucidate the choices of the citizens who have the power to determine the elected representatives who will succeed them.

1. MEPs who exercise their powers within a partisan framework

On 25 May next, the French will elect 74 MEPs called upon to exercise substantial powers within an institution that today occupies a key position in the EU institutional process. Internal developments in the EU, the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and successive international events, in particular the economic and financial crises, have brought the EP to make its voice heard in legislative and budgetary matters, as well as in the monitoring of the other European institutions. The 2014 elections will be a first step in renewing European decision-makers and political balances within the EU. Partisan balances within the next EP will directly influence the expression of the divides that will structure EU functioning and the development of European integration for the five years to come.

1.1. MEPs providing a familiar face for EU citizens

The first civic issue of European elections lies in the election of members of one of the main European institutions, in other terms, citizens' representatives within the only EU institution elected by direct universal suffrage; in addition, through their ballot, voters are likely to influence the choice of the next President of the European Commission.

1.1.1. An election allowing citizens to directly choose their representatives in the EP

Since 1979⁴, the European Parliament has embodied direct democratic legitimacy that derives its foundations from universal suffrage, whereas the Council and the Commission embody other legitimacies, state legitimacy for the first, and technical and indirect for the second. The significance of this democratic legitimacy underlines the fact that one of the main issues at stake in the

⁴. Between 1958 and 1979, the MEPs were appointed by the national parliaments of each member state. Since 1979, when the first European elections were held, they have been elected by direct universal suffrage by all EU citizens for a five-year term.

European elections lies in the direct choice by citizens of their representatives within the EP, the only supranational institution elected by direct universal suffrage, i.e. the “faces” that will represent them and embody them. Although numerous European officials (President and members of the European Commission, President of the ECB, President of the European Council, etc.) give the EU a face, these are non-elected officials. The only directly elected Community officials are the members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

Even though the election of MEPs presents characteristics that distinguish it from other elections organised within the national democracies of the member states, particularly due to the very specific method of appointment (number of voters per MEP is variable in relation to the size of the member state (*see Annex 1*) and lack of uniformity of national voting procedures), the European elections are an opportunity given to citizens to choose regularly (once every five years), according to their partisan preferences, their representatives who, once elected, will join together within the political groups representing the great political families: Conservatives, Liberals, Social Democrats, Ecologists, Radical Left, “Euroseptic” Right, etc.

1.1.2. Elected representatives who will nominate the President of the European Commission and the College of Commissioners

The first months of term of the European Parliament, from July to September, will as usual be marked by the investiture of the new Commission. Firstly, the President must be chosen on the basis of a proposal by the European Council which must then be approved by the Parliament. This year, for the first time ever, the process involves European parties putting forward lists of candidates who submitted their application for this post, seeking to create a greater link between democratic expression and EU governance. Then, the College will have to be appointed based on proposals by the member states, which will also have to be validated by the Parliament. The result of this dual process will influence EU political life for the five years to come.

MEPs who will nominate the President of the European Commission

The European Parliament rightly points out that the May 2014 elections will have a more direct impact than the previous elections on the appointment of

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the President of the Commission by the European Council. In fact, the 2014 European elections will be the first organised on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty. The provisions of the Treaty (Article 17.7 and declaration No. 11) explicitly state that the heads of state and government must “take into account the elections to the European Parliament” when proposing a candidate for President of the Commission, who will then be elected by the new European Parliament. In this context, the nomination of candidates from European parties to the Presidency of the Commission has already had a positive effect insofar as it makes the election campaign more personal and allows people to “put faces on the divides” that structure European political life (*see Table 1*).

TABLE 1 ► **Candidates nominated for the position of President of the European Commission by the European political parties**

EUROPEAN PARTY* (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT)	CANDIDATE NOMINATED
NA/far-right	-----
EFD	-----
ECR	-----
EPP	Jean-Claude Juncker (Luxembourg)
ALDE	Guy Verhofstadt (Belgium)
Greens/EFA	José Bové (France) and Ska Keller (Germany)
PES	Martin Schulz (Germany)
PEL	Alexis Tsipras (Greece)

* NA= Non-attached (we also find the French acronym NI = Non-Inscrits); EFD = Europe of Freedom and Democracy; ECR = European Conservatives and Reformists; EPP = European People's Party; ALDE = Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; Greens/EFA = Greens/European Free Alliance; PES = Party of European Socialists; PEL = Party of the European Left

From a legal standpoint, it is not necessary to be a candidate in the European elections to become President of the Commission, and the European Council is not obliged to select him/her from the candidates nominated by the parties. It is above all important to propose a candidate who represents the political majority of the new EP, whether or not he or she had presented his or her candidacy before. In this respect, it is significant for example that Angela Merkel recognise that “the Parliament and the Council must be responsible together for the choice of the President (of the Commission)... The Council

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must make a proposal but the Parliament must also give its approval”⁵. At the same time, she was interpreting the Treaty literally by underlining the fact that the heads of state and government have a say in this process. Also, certain heads of state and government may not want to make the commitment of having imposed a President of the Commission of the same nationality but not from the same political side (which would be the case for Germany if the S&D won the European elections, with Martin Schulz as leader of the European Social Democrats). This would in fact deprive him of the chance of appointing a Commissioner of his choice, as there is one Commissioner per member state. Therefore, while it is possible that the nomination of President of the Commission would take place in an exclusively partisan logic, we must keep in mind that strict interpretation of the Treaty should not necessarily be systematic nor is it compulsory.

However, the candidate for the post of President of the Commission proposed by the heads of state and government will ultimately be voted in by the new EP. This implies that the latter can refuse the President of the Commission proposed by the European Council (a right which implicitly stemmed from the power of approval that it already held). In this way, the heads of state and government will have to choose a candidate who seems likely to obtain the support of a majority coalition within the EP (EPP-S&D or EPP-ALDE-ECR, S&D-ALDE-Greens, etc.)⁶. The political groups of the new EP will be in competition with each other before the elections, but they will then need to form a coalition capable of voting in favour of the candidate proposed by the European Council, i.e. obtaining an absolute majority of MEPs and not only of voters (at least 376 votes will be necessary). The choice of the next President of the Commission will therefore stem from negotiations between the European Council and the European Parliament.

MEPs who will also play a role in the composition of the Commission

While the result of the European political competition is clear enough to impose the political evidence of a winner at the head of the Commission, the European elections will be less decisive for the composition of the Brussels College than

5. Cf. *Der Spiegel*, 4 June 2013.

6. See Table 6 for a presentation of the political groups in the European Parliament.

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for the nomination of its President. It is in fact the political affiliation of each of the national governments that will have an impact on the choice of a particular commissioner, this depending on how the citizens vote during the national elections. From this point of view, the European Commission is already politicised, as its current members in fact belong to European political parties, as will be the case for future members (*see Table 2*). Nevertheless, this reality does not resolve the issue of future developments in terms of the intensified “politicisation” of the Brussels College⁷.

It is therefore informative to examine the current state of the political groups within the national governments of the European Union:

- 12 member states are led by left-wing governments or left-wing majority coalitions: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, France, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia;
- 12 others are led by right-wing governments or right-wing majority coalitions: Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain and Sweden;
- 4 are led by centre-led governments: Luxembourg (alliance between Liberals and Social Democrats), Netherlands (alliance between Liberals and Social Democrats), Estonia (alliance between Liberals and Social Democrats), Slovenia (centre left).

We can therefore assume that national governments wish to appoint Commissioners with identical political beliefs as their Prime minister, an assumption that is generally corroborated for the 2009-2014 period (*see Annex 2*)⁸, and thus provide for the constitution of an upcoming Commission that is more politically balanced than at present, with fewer members affiliated to the EPP and ALDE groups and more members belonging to the S&D group (*see Table 2*).

7. See Thierry Chopin and Lukas Macek, “Après Lisbonne, le défi de la politisation de l’Union européenne”, *Les études du CERI*, n° 65, Centre d’études et de recherches internationales / Sciences Po, 2010.

8. Governments can also appoint Commissioners belonging to another party that is member of the coalition to power – but for the 2009-2014 period, these alternative choices were generally offset.

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TABLE 2 ► **Composition of the European Commission: what political balance?**

POLITICAL AFFILIATION	2009-2014	2014-2019
EPP	13	11
ALDE	8	4
S&D	7	12
Other political groups	-	-
ECR	0	1

NB: 2009-2014: current political affiliations, 2014-2019: assumed political affiliations, in relation to the political party dominating the current national government

Source: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

This does not mean however that the European elections will have no impact on the composition of the Commission. The latter firstly gives rise to a power struggle between states to obtain a particular portfolio, the ones considered to be most strategic being those dealing with economic matters and those with strong legislative impact. But once the portfolios have been negotiated between the member states and the President of the Commission, the Commissioners must be heard and approved by the Parliament, which regularly rejects certain candidatures or presses for the reallocation of the portfolios.

The internal political balance of the Parliament can therefore influence the political affiliation of the candidates for certain portfolios considered to be strategic, and in particular those linked to economic policy. In 2009, the Commissioners of a political affiliation close to that of the majority party in the Parliament, the EPP, were thus given the key posts of Energy, Trade, Transport, the Internal Market and Services and Financial Programming and Budget.

In this way, even though the member states exert and will continue to exert more and more influence on the composition of the Commission, and even though the Commissioners that they will have appointed will inevitably reflect, at least to a certain extent, the political affiliation of the various national governments, the political influence of the EP on the composition of the Commission is nonetheless real. This means that the citizens, for their part, will be able to influence the political course of European integration. Voters will be able to directly influence the political affiliation of the President of the

Commission and his or her team. The same will then apply for the political choices of the College.

1.2. MEPs making decisions on substantial political issues

One of the major issues of the European elections is to appoint the members of an increasingly stronger institution. It now has substantial powers in the normative, budgetary and supervisory spheres, and these are expressed through the numerous decisions and votes cast all throughout its term. From a political standpoint, these elections lead to the appointment of MEPs who have intervened in a significant way during the 2009-2014 term in several areas, and who will play a key role in dealing with numerous issues during the 2014-2019 term.

1.2.1. Exercising important decision-making powers

The importance of the May 2014 electoral process firstly stems from the fact that the Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997), Nice (2000) and Lisbon (2009) Treaties have continuously strengthened the decision-making powers of the European Parliament in the normative, budgetary and supervisory spheres, whereas in the first two decades of European integration, the Council of ministers decided alone.

After this continuous increase of powers, the MEPs have substantial decision-making powers, in co-decision with the Council of ministers, in their exercise of most EU powers (*see Graph 1*):

- The EP exercises within the frame of co-decision the very large majority of the EU's legislative powers. On this point, Graph 1 allows for visualising the numerical impact of the requalification of the co-decision procedure as "ordinary legislative procedure". An overwhelming majority of legal basis counted in Table 3 have been categorised under this label, which allows for the EP to be on an equal foot with the Council on an encompassing variety of topics. Among these will be dispositions on the EU budget, freedom of movement, security and justice or common policies. The European Parliament gained for instance in influence on issues related to the adoption of financial rules within the EU, on issues related to the adoption of

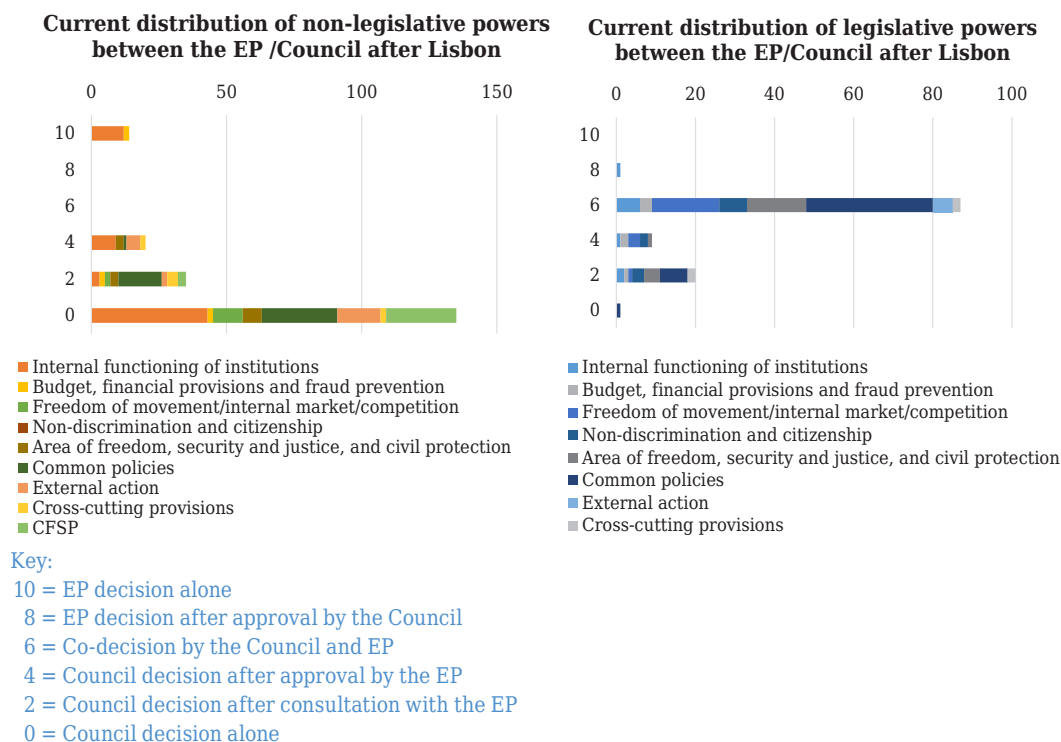
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measures aimed at eliminating distortions of the internal market, or to taking into consideration the citizens' initiatives. The Lisbon Treaty also significantly increased the powers of the European Parliament towards the area of freedom, security and justice. Nonetheless, there are still few topics where the Parliament can decide for his own, with ascendancy on the Council.

- The Council continues to decide alone, or just consults the EP, in the exercise of the EU's non-legislative powers. The most striking example is foreign policy, where the legal weight of the European Parliament is so to say non-existent. The category "Internal functioning of the institutions", which appears in Graph 1 as a non-legislative domain where the Parliament can make decisions on its own mostly refers to the internal functioning of the EP, that is to say its internal regulation.

To conclude, one can say the EP and the Council now work most of the time on an equal foot in legislative domains for which member states have granted the EU with a competence; but that the Council remains predominant in non-legislative matters such as foreign policy, which generally work under the inter-governmental method and therefore are not meant to be treated outside the forums of direct bargaining between the governments of members states (to which the Council belongs).

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GRAPH 1 ► The decision-making powers of the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty⁹

Source: Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin, *Politique européenne. États, pouvoirs et citoyens de l'Union européenne*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po/Dalloz, 2010. Graphics: Claire Taglione-Darmé

A study of the activity of MEPs during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term in quantitative terms allows us to see that this term, although built on the foundations of the previous ones, also featured new elements. This continuity can be seen in topics that led to the greatest number of acts (*see Table 3*) given that industrial policy and the internal market, and the environment, consumers and health protection are the areas in which the Parliament has greatly intervened in the past.

⁹ Graph 1 is based on Annex 3 of Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin's book, *Politique européenne. États, pouvoirs et citoyens de l'Union européenne*, Presses de Sciences Po / Dalloz, 2010, which exhaustively describes the legal bases of the post-Lisbon legislative and non-legislative powers of the European Parliament and the Council. In the graphs presented here, one unit on the x-axis equals one legal base entry recorded in the aforementioned annex.

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TABLE 3 ▶ Acts adopted between July 2009 and March 2014

	EP & COUNCIL	COUNCIL ALONE	MAIN AREAS (BY NUMBER OF ACTS)
Directives adopted	124	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industrial policy and internal market - Environment, consumers and health protection - Transport policy - Right of establishment and freedom to provide services - Freedom of movement for workers and social policy and employment
Regulations adopted	253	543	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industrial policy and internal market - Environment, consumers and health protection - Transport policy - Agriculture - An area of freedom, security and justice

Data: EurLex, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/statistics/legislative-acts-statistics.html>

Table: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

1.2.2. Important political interventions during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term

However useful it may be, the institutional presentation of the powers held by the Parliament needs to be rounded out by a more political approach mentioning the acts it adopted during its 2009-2014 term, mainly from a normative standpoint (i.e. directives and regulations), but also from a budgetary level and in terms of supervision.

The detail of the mainly economic activities of the 2009-2014 EP highlights a parliamentary term focused on managing the crisis and adapting to its new powers – for example in budgetary matters, an area where the number of votes in the hemicycle almost doubled between this parliamentary term and the previous one (see Table 4).

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TABLE 4 ▶ Important EP interventions broken down by area, comparing 2004-2009 and 2009-2014

AREAS OF INTERVENTION	NUMBER OF CASES 2004-2009	NUMBER OF CASES 2009-2014*	IMPORTANT EXAMPLES (2009-2014)
Budget	100	191	Resolution on the 2014 budget Resolution for the MFF
Economic and monetary affairs	93	144	Resolutions on reform of the banking sector Resolution concerning Economic and Monetary Union (Six-Pack, Two-Pack)
International trade	41	119	Resolutions on the EU-USA trade agreement
Budgetary control	41	114	Several annual discharges concerning other institutions
Environment and public health	214	113	Resolutions on the harmonisation of the production and sale of tobacco products in the EU
Civil liberties, justice and home affairs	157	109	Resolution on the development of EUROSUR
Foreign and security policy**	195	213	Resolution to suspend the SWIFT agreement Legislative resolution on the EEAS
Employment and social affairs	51	55	Resolutions concerning implementation of the "Horizon 2020" programme Resolution to increase the FEAD

* Votes taken into account between 1 July 2009 and 6 February 2014

** Most resolutions concerning foreign and security policy do not bind the European Council and do not give rise to direct legal implications.

Data: VoteWatch Europe; Table: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

A substantial normative impact

The 2009-2014 parliamentary term, the first after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, was a good illustration of the increased legislative powers of the EP, which adopted in the co-decision procedure with the Council between June 2009 and February 2014 some 125 directives and 238 regulations, as opposed to 142 directives and 145 regulations between June 2004 and February 2009. The EP's production of legislature during the 2009-2014 term therefore largely exceeded that of the 2004-2009 term, several months even before the end of

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the term. These texts mainly concerned the areas of environment and consumer protection, but also the internal market and transport policy.

The EP has played an important role in management of the economic and financial crisis and in the drafting of legislation to strengthen macroeconomic and financial supervisory mechanisms within the EU (*see voting analysis concerning Graphs 8c to 12c*).

In 2010, the “European semester” was introduced to coordinate economic policies, and in 2011, a set of six legislative texts was adopted (Six-Pack). In May 2013, two regulations entered into force, allowing better transparency of national budgetary decisions (Two-Pack).

A special committee on the “financial, economic and social crisis” was also set up within the EP from October 2009 to July 2011, to analyse the causes and the consequences of the crisis, as well as the efficiency of Community legislation.

The EP has also worked for the establishment of a financial transaction tax (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 7b*). It approved the Commission’s proposal in September 2011, but due to the difficult negotiations with the European Council, the decision was made by 11 member states to launch enhanced cooperation in this area.

Budgetary powers also enhanced

Budgetary powers are traditionally one of the core powers of national parliaments. In this respect, the EP is no exception to the rule. It is through budgetary procedures that it has acquired a certain number of important powers.

Multiannual financial perspectives or Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) are determined for seven years by an inter-institutional agreement, often following bitter negotiations. While the EP is not in a position to intervene on the total amount of this framework, it can nevertheless decide on how it will be distributed. The regulation determining the MFF, according to Article 312 (TFEU), requires approval by the European Parliament, given by a majority of its component members.

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The 2014-2020 MFF was officially adopted in November 2013 by the Parliament after several months of negotiations with the Council (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 9c*). During these negotiations, the EP obtained a revision of the budget by 2016, as well as the reassessment of funding of the budget. The total budget for the next programming period therefore comes to €960 million in commitment appropriations and €908 million in payment appropriations. The amount of this budget has decreased in relation to the previous MFF, but the EP put pressure for more flexibility. It succeeded in having the unused funds transferred for the following year or reused in other budgetary sectors and in having discussions launched on the creation of new own resources (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 9b*).

The EP was well and truly present at the time of the negotiations¹⁰ and had its voice heard on topics that it deemed particularly important and that it had defined in its July 2013 resolution¹¹.

Among the budgetary funds that were extensively debated, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), representing almost 40% of the EU budget, is a particularly interesting example. In November 2013, the Council and the Parliament thus adopted an agreement on five legislative projects reforming the CAP after 2013 (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 10a*).

The EP became particularly involved on the issue of helping the most deprived, with a new fund being created on the basis of agricultural surpluses in the 1980s, but called into question by the Court of Justice at the behest of certain member states due to its social nature. It staunchly defended maintaining the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived at €3.5 billion (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 7a*).

10. See Nicolas-Jean Brehon, "The European Budget Agreement 2014/2020: the end of a (slight) budgetary suspense?", *European Issue* No. 266, Robert Schuman Foundation, 04.02.2013.

11. European Parliament, *Resolution of 3 July 2013 on the political agreement concerning the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020* (2012/2799(RSP)).

A discreet but real influence on international agreements

Approval by the EP is also required when the EU concludes international agreements. Since the Lisbon Treaty, international agreements are submitted to the EP for approval in increasingly numerous areas.

The EP exercised this power by initially refusing the SWIFT agreement on banking data transfers from the EU to the United States as part of the fight against terrorism. It refused the agreement in February 2010 but accepted a new version in July of the same year.

This refusal illustrated the will of the EP to use its “right to veto” as appropriate, from the very start of its new term, thus further asserting itself within the institutional system.

More recently, the EP adopted a non-binding resolution concerning an international agreement between the EU and the United States on this Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) or SWIFT agreement. Following accusations of espionage by the US National Security Agency – NSA, concerning the banking data of EU citizens managed by the Belgian company SWIFT, the EP urged the Commission to suspend the programme (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 11*). Even though the EP does not have the formal powers to initiate the suspension or denunciation of an international agreement, “the Commission will have to act if the Parliament withdraws its support for a particular agreement”, says the approved text. It adds that “the Parliament will take account of the Commission’s response to this demand when considering whether to give its consent to future international agreements”, as stated in the EP press release of 23 October 2013¹².

Stronger impact in the European interinstitutional game

The 2009-2014 parliamentary term was finally marked by the new balance of power between the various institutions. The balance within the European institutional system made up of the Council, the Commission and the Parliament, with all three playing key roles in producing EU regulations, has been

12. European Parliament, “MEPs call for suspension of EU-US bank data deal in response to NSA snooping”, *Press release*, 23.11.2013.

reorganised. By increasing the scope of legislative areas covered by co-decision, the EP has had a major normative impact.

The will of the EP to assert itself in relation to the other EU institutions has been seen through its involvement in the implementation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the administrative complement to the creation of the post of High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The decision establishing the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS had to be unanimously approved by the Council, on the basis of a proposal by the High Representative and after approval by the European Commission. The EP only had to be consulted as part of the procedure.

Nevertheless, the EP was actively involved in issues relative to financial regulation and the status of personnel. While it was shown that the positions of the EP on this topic was exaggerated in comparison with its real influence on the decision¹³, the fact remains that it defended its positions on the organisation of the Service (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 9a*). The EP argued for the involvement of the various Commissioners concerned by external action (Neighbourhood Policy, Development and Humanitarian Aid). It also defended the idea of proposing political assistants, rather than senior officials, to support Catherine Ashton in her work. It also wished to hear officials from the EEAS.

The EP has thus become deeply involved in negotiations and left a strong mark on the compromise reached in Madrid in June 2010. Catherine Ashton signed a “declaration on political accountability” in which she committed to informing and consulting the EP on choices concerning common foreign and security policy. She is thus personally present or represented during plenary sessions of the Parliament. Lastly, EEAS officials, as well as heads of delegation and special representatives can be heard by the EP’s committees.

The EP, beyond its role in the investiture procedure for the European Commission, has launched an inquiry on the Troika that is the International Monetary Fund the European Commission and the European Central Bank,

13. Maxime Lefebvre and Christophe Hillion, “The European External Action Service: towards a common diplomacy?”, *European Issue* No. 184, Robert Schuman Foundation, 25.10.2010.

which played a major role in the crisis. The EP decided to examine whether the measures taken by the Troika as part of the plan for funding countries in crisis were really beneficial. The Parliament maintains that the Troika sometimes demanded reforms that were too difficult to implement for the member states concerned, to the extent of depriving them from part of the payments due to them. This inquiry took place during the early months of 2014, with a vote by the EP on two reports on the topic during its session of 13 March. The first report, presented by the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, underpinned the difficulties in internal workings of the Troika, and pointed out the lack of adaptability of its programmes to the specific circumstances of each country. The second report, presented by the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, emphasised the need to direct future reforms towards stimulating employment, and maintaining an acceptable level of social security to protect individuals.

1.2.3. MEPs called on to make important decisions during the 2014-2019 parliamentary term

The MEPs elected in May 2014 will have to make decisions on several economic, social, environmental, political and diplomatic issues. Although it is not easy at this stage to detail the exact content of hundreds of draft directives, regulations, international agreements and resolutions on which the MEPs will be asked to decide, it is however possible to classify them according to three major types of issues (*see Table 5*):

- How can the EU contribute to resolving the crisis?
- How can the foundations of European integration evolve?
- What strategy can the EU have in globalisation?

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TABLE 5 ▶ The main issues of the 2014-2019 parliamentary term

MAIN ISSUES	EXAMPLES
How can the EU contribute to resolving the crisis? (growth and employment)	Agricultural and regional policy “European Youth Guarantee” Connecting Europe Facility Liberalisation of services and e-commerce Free trade agreement with the USA Regulation of the banking sector/banking union Financial transaction tax
How can the foundations of European integration evolve? (euro, single market, free movement, political union)	Application of the Stability and Growth Pact Budget for the euro area Common corporate tax base Posting of workers Access for Europeans to social security Cooperation within the Schengen area Division of powers between the EU and states
What strategy can the EU have in globalisation? (EU neighbours, foreign policy, energy-climate, immigration)	Energy-climate package Management of external borders Visas and the right to asylum Development and humanitarian aid Accession negotiations with Turkey and Serbia Association agreements with Morocco and Ukraine Relations with Russia

Source: Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin

How will the EU contribute to resolving the crisis?

Although it is the responsibility of the member states themselves to define their economic, social and environmental strategies (with quite varied results), the MEPs will nonetheless have the power to influence the content of what the EU could contribute in these areas.

They will have to determine and assess the spending commitments of the €959 billion in expenditure provided for by the 2014-2020 MFF, which was recently adopted by the European Council and their predecessors. In other terms, it must vote on the annual budgets of all policies funded by the EU (agricultural policy, regional policy, social policy, funding of infrastructure, transport and energy, etc.). The MEPs must also ensure that the Growth and Employment Pact, adopted in June 2012, is implemented correctly, including concerning

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the contributions of the European Investment Bank and the sharp growth of “project bonds”. Finally, they have the possibility of revising the “Multiannual Financial Framework”, either by readjusting the allocation of expenditure according to the sectors, or by deciding to create new own resources for the EU budget.

It will also be the task of the new MEPs to define under what conditions the deepening of the single market will be continued (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 12a*): completion of liberalisation of “network industries” (railway sector, etc.), liberalisation of the single market for services (going beyond the stereotypical “Polish plumbers”, creation of a veritable digital single market, in particular in terms of e-commerce, increased competition within the framework of public procurement, etc. It is also these MEPs who will have to approve external liberalisation measures currently negotiated at EU and international level, as regards trade and/or investment: negotiations with the USA as part of the TTIP (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 12b*), with China, Japan, India, Mercosur, Vietnam, etc.

Lastly, the new MEPs will be called on to extend the efforts to regulate financial services and the banking system, undertaken by their predecessors: what reform of the banking sector (separation of investment banks and deposit banks?), what crisis prevention, management and resolution regime for financial establishments other than banks, what revision of rules for pension funds and professional retirement institutions...? They will also have to assess and complete the implementation of the European banking union (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 8a*) providing both a Single Supervisory Mechanism under the auspices of the ECB, a Single Bank Resolution Mechanism and the development of a common “safety net” in the event of a banking crisis, and the possible creation of a European Deposit Guarantee Scheme. Lastly, they will have to monitor the effective implementation of the financial transaction tax project, undertaken at this point on the basis of enhanced cooperation bringing together 11 EU member states.

Strengthening the basic values of European integration

In addition to the aforementioned implementation conditions for European funding, internal and external liberalisation and the regulation of financial

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services, other economic and social issues linked to the foundations of European integration (EMU, single market, area of free movement and political union) will be put to the vote of the MEPs elected in May 2014.

These MEPs will then have to take a stance in the management and development of the euro area and the EMU, by exercising their supervisory powers with regard to the Commission and the European Central Bank, including with regard to their participation in the work of the Troika (which however should end in the short and medium term, as is already the case in Ireland); by adopting resolutions on how the Council implements the Stability and Growth Pact; by deciding on proposals aiming to create a “euro area budget”, for support for structural reforms in the member states or to ensure macroeconomic stability within the EMU; or also by envisaging the pooling of debt issuance at European level, for the funding of specific common projects or that of new or old debts (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 8b*).

The new MEPs will also have to decide not only on the possible further liberalisation of the single market, as previously mentioned, but also on the conditions under which this single market operates. Deepening social Europe (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 13a*), with, for example support for worker mobility, promotion of social entrepreneurship (European Foundation Statute and European Mutual Society Statute) or the establishment of a minimum wage within each member state? Enhancing consumer protection through the adoption of new sanitary and phytosanitary standards, through the supervision of GMO cultivation (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 7c*) or by acting for the protection of personal data? Tax cooperation, both to strengthen the fight against fraud and tax evasion or money laundering, but also for the possible creation of a common consolidated corporate tax base?

The MEPs will also have to take a stance in debates on the European area of free movement. In addition to monitoring the implementation of the directive relating to supervising the secondment of workers, they will have to decide on the “labour mobility package” proposed by the Commission, and which will mainly target review of regulations on the coordination of social security systems, and more precisely the conditions in which Europeans can access long-term healthcare services and unemployment benefits. MEPs will also have to decide on management of the Schengen area (*see voting analysis concerning*

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Graph 10b), in other terms, the creation of mobile patrols within this area and joint controls and the external borders, cooperation with police and customs, civil protection, judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters, etc.

Lastly, it will be up to the new MEPs to intervene in debates on the functioning and nature of the European political union. What division of powers between the EU and its member states? What balance between federal actions and the prerogatives of nation-states? What “differentiation” within the EU and what links between the euro area and “greater Europe”? What subsequent democratisation of the EU institutions?

Asserting Europe’s role in globalisation

The MEPs elected in May 2014 will be called on to make a series of decisions of an international dimension, which will contribute to asserting Europe’s role in globalisation. In addition to the trade agreements currently being negotiated by the EU, at least four other types of issues are likely to be submitted for their appraisal during their term.

First, they will have to decide on the concrete implementation of elements of the EU’s new “energy-climate package”, a major component in Europe’s strategy to combat climate change and for energy transition ahead of the renewal of the Kyoto Protocol in 2015. They will in particular have to decide on European objectives for climate and energy policies by 2030: how to reduce the carbon-based dimension of economies, what actions to improve energy efficiency, particularly in buildings, what tax for polluting activities, etc. (*see voting analysis concerning Graph 13c*)?

The new MEPs will also have to take a stance on migration issues, whose management is becoming more Europeanised. What national and European policies in terms of visas? What national and EU strategies and actions to fight illegal immigration and what strengthening of European solidarity at external borders? What policies in terms of the right of asylum and reception of refugees? What vision of immigration and what integration strategies in an ageing Europe that only makes up 7% of the world’s population?

The MEPs will have to decide on the nature of relations established between the EU and its neighbours, which are a key element for the safety and prosperity of the EU and the European continent as a whole. What association and partnership agreements with Arab and Mediterranean countries, with Morocco, for example? What agreements and what strategy vis-à-vis the EU's "Eastern" neighbours, starting with Ukraine and Russia? What evolution for current EU accession negotiations (in particular with Turkey and Serbia) and what preparation for future enlargements of the EU (none have apparently been programmed for the 2014-2019 period)?

The crises that have occurred in Africa and more recently in Ukraine should finally bring the new MEPs to determine the conditions under which further positions and joint initiatives in terms of foreign policy and defence could be developed. In addition to their votes on European spending commitments for development aid and humanitarian aid, in addition to their votes relating to the fight against terrorism, for the MEPs it will be about making their voices heard on subjects for which a European approach is yet to be built.

Overall, the MEPs elected in May 2014 will make a series of decisions that will considerably impact the living conditions of Europeans, and whose content will depend on the political balance of power stemming from the elections. It is by voting for the candidates whose positions and proposals correspond mostly to their own preferences that the Europeans will exercise the power that this election by direct universal suffrage gives them.

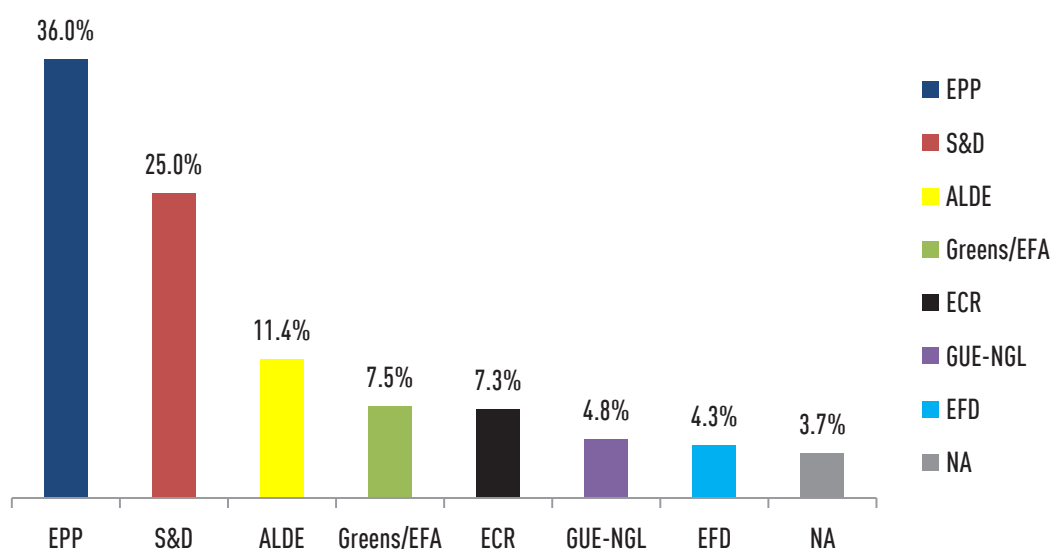
1.3. Elected representatives acting within political groups

MEPs are structured and organised according to a classic political breakdown within transnational political groups that play a key role in the European Parliament: they represent the great political families (Christian-Democrats, Liberals, Social-Democrats, Ecologists, etc.) and contribute both to exercising the powers held by this institution and to the political structuring of its decisions (*see Table 6*). As shown by analysis of the votes in the second part of this study, the political groups set the tone for the main budgetary, legislative and political decisions made by the EP throughout its parliamentary term.

1.3.1. Key political groups of the European Parliament

Given the outcome of the June 2009 European elections (see Graphs 1 and 2), the main group in terms of seats, is the European People's Party (EPP). It is the successor of the "Christian-Democrat" group, already present at the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) from 1953 onwards, and renamed "European People's Party" during the 1979 elections¹⁴. It gathers parties of Christian-Democrat tradition all throughout the EU, such as UMP in France, CDU/CSU in Germany or Forza Italia in Italy (see Table 6). It received 36% of EU votes during the 2009 elections (see Graph 3), and has 275 MEPs in March 2014 (see Graph 3). In terms of number of MEPs, France has the third-leading delegation within the EPP group¹⁵. The group's current President is the French Joseph Daul.

GRAPH 2 ▶ Overall EU scores in the 2009 European elections



Data: European Parliament; Graph: Yves Bertoncini and Valentin Kreilinger

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats is the second biggest group in terms of seats within the EP. It is also the successor of a group that was already present at the Common Assembly of the ECSC in 1953 and it took its

14. See <http://www.eppgroup.eu/history>

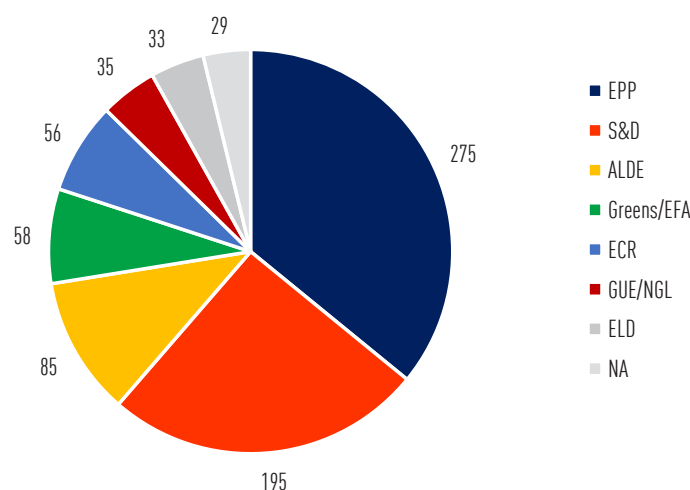
15. See <http://www.delegationfrancaise-ppc.eu/>

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current name after the 2009 elections when the group welcomed MEPs from the Italian Democratic Party¹⁶ and received 25% of votes. It welcomes MEPs whose parties are members of the European Socialist Party or with similar ideas, for a total of 195 MEPs in March 2014. The French Socialists are the fourth-leading national delegation within the group, after the German SPD, the Italian Partito Democratico and the Spanish Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)¹⁷.

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, ALDE, is the European Liberal Democratic Party of the same name, but it also includes MEPs from other European parties, as is the case for example for MEPs from the French Mouvement démocrate (MoDem) (members of the European Democratic Party). Once known as the ELDR group, it brings together parties with liberal and social-liberal traditions such as the British Liberal Democrats or the German Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP). The French are currently the third-leading delegation, behind the German FDP and the British Lib Dems and before Italia Dei Valori¹⁸. In 2009, this group garnered 11.4% of votes, for 85 seats in March 2014.

GRAPH 3 ► Distribution of seats per political group within the European Parliament in March 2014



Data: European Parliament; Graph: Yves Bertoncini and Valentin Kreiling

16. See http://www.henriweber.eu/chargement/parti_article/2_fic1_legroupedessocialistesetdemocratesaupe.pdf

17. See www.deputes-socialistes.eu/

18. See www.alde.eu

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The Greens unites MEPs whose national parties belong to the European Green Party or the European Free Alliance (not recognised as a party by the Parliament). Gathering MEPs with a Ecologist tendency, it received 7.5% of votes in 2009 and has 58 MEPs in March 2014. The French members of Europe Écologie - Les Verts, who had achieved a good score in 2009, are the second-largest delegation after the German Bündnis 90/Die Grünen¹⁹.

The ECR group of European Conservatives and Reformists was formed in 2009 at David Cameron's initiative. The leader of the British Conservative Party wanted to leave the EPP group for national political reasons. He was joined by the Kaczynski brothers' Polish party, Law and Justice (PiS), and the Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS), and as a result garnered 7.3% of votes in 2009. Adding to these affiliations the individual rallying of members of parties officially affiliated elsewhere - most often with the EPP - it has 56 deputies in March 2014 but none of them are French.

The Group of the United European Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) is a group originally created by the European communist parties²⁰, and made up of members from European far-left or radical left parties, such as the French Front de Gauche or Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste. Its members are either affiliated with the Party of the European Left, or members of party groups such as the Nordic Green Left Alliance or the European Anti-Capitalist Left. With 4.8% of votes received in 2009, it has 35 MEPs in March 2014. The French are currently the second-leading national delegation, after the German group of Die Linke.

The Europe of Liberties and Democracy group is formed around sovereignist and far-right MEPs from the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and Italy's Lega Nord. The only French member is Philippe de Villiers from Mouvement pour la France (MPF), who is Vice-President of the group. ELD garnered some 4.3% of votes in 2009, representing 33 seats in March 2014.

Lastly, the French are represented within the non-attached group by three MEPs from the Front national. Non-attached MEPs are those who did not want

19. See <http://europeecologie.eu/-groupe,26->

20. See <http://guengl.eu/group/history>

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to be part of an existing group and have not formed a group on their own initiative. As a result, they do not participate in any group dynamic implementing a strategy to influence the EP. Other parties having chosen not to join a group are for example the MEPs from the Freiheitliche Partei of Austria (FPÖ) or the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik).

TABLE 6 ► Political groups at the European Parliament – political composition

ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME OF GROUP	LEFT/ RIGHT	FRENCH MEMBER PARTY	OTHER MEMBER PARTY (EXAMPLE)
EPP	European People's Party (Christian-Democrats)	Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) - Nouveau centre - Parti radical/ Union des démocrates et indépendants 	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU, Christian Democratic Union Germany) and Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU, Social Union of Christians, Germany)
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats at the European Parliament	Left	Parti socialiste (PS)	Partito Democratico (DP, Democratic Party, Italy)
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe	Centre-right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mouvement démocrate (MoDem) - Citoyenneté, Action, Participation pour le 21^{ème} siècle 	Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems, UK)
Greens/ EFA	Greens/ European Free Alliance	Centre-left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Europe Écologie - Partitu di Nazione Corsa 	GroenLinks (GL, Green Left, Netherlands)
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists	Right of the EPP	/	Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc (PiS, Law and Justice (PiS, Poland) and Conservative Party (United-Kingdom)
GUE/NGL	Group of the United European Left/Nordic Green Left	Left of S&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front de gauche - Parti communiste - Liste "Alliance des Outre-Mers" 	Die Linke (DL, The Left, Germany)

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ELD	Europe of Liberties and Democracy	Right of ECR	Mouvement pour la France (MPF)	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)
NA	Non-attached	/	Front national (FN)	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ, Freedom Party of Austria) and Partij voor de Vrijheid (Freedom Party, Netherlands)

Data: VoteWatch Europe; Table: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

1.3.2. Partisan divisions expressed in a specific context

The vital role of political groups stems from both a proportional and majority logic at work within the European Parliament.

The European Parliament functions on the basis of a proportional logic

In both Strasbourg and Brussels, the ability of the various political groups to express themselves is in fact determined by their numeric importance²¹, which gives them a precise number of “points” that they will have to use to acquire all the necessary resources for their activities. It is the political groups that determine which MEPs will have key posts, not only in the central bodies of the EP (Presidency, Bureau, etc.) but also within the Parliamentary Committees, as it is on the basis of agreements between groups that the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Committees are appointed. Furthermore, the “Rapporteurs” in charge of studying the budgetary and legislative proposals submitted by the Commission are also appointed in proportion to the political groups balance of powers. It is therefore not surprising that these Rapporteurs, whose conclusions greatly influence the final decision adopted by the European Parliament, are mainly from EPP, S&D and ALDE groups. It is also the political groups that determine which MEPs will speak at committee meetings, and particularly in plenary sessions, where the speaking time is calculated in exact proportion to their numeric importance. Available speaking time is therefore greater for EPP or S&D MEPs, and rather reduced for MEPs belonging to small groups. Lastly, it is the political groups that appoint a particular MEP to the

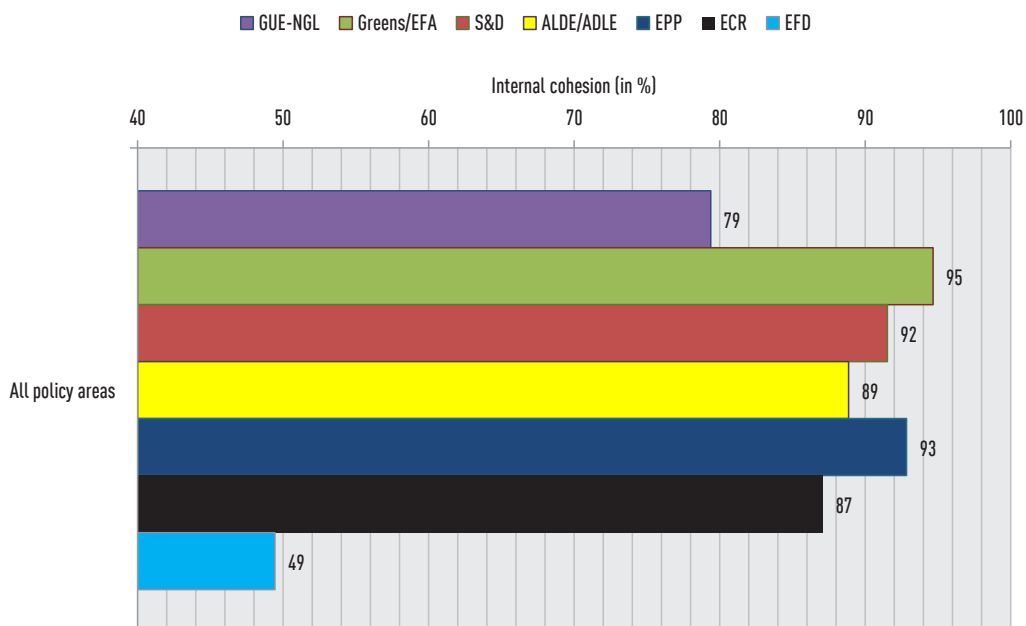
21. It is the Hondt system that is in force within the EP.

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post of “Coordinator”. The work of these Coordinators with the Parliamentary Committees is relatively unknown, but its importance remains considerable. These Coordinators, who are in charge of guiding decisions in Parliamentary Committee meetings on behalf of the groups that have appointed them, have significant influence on the work of the EP.

Due to the constraints linked to the EP’s functioning and procedures at work, in order to influence the decisions put to the vote in plenary sessions, the groups must not only have sufficient influence within the EP but be capable of showing a level of internal cohesion allowing them to shape the decision. As a result, the levels of internal cohesion of the political groups within the EP are in general high, although unequal, with the maximum level being reached by the Greens/EFA group at 94.66% of votes in common for plenary sessions, and the minimum level being that of EFD with 49.45% of internal cohesion. No figure was available for non-attached MEPs (especially far-right), whose cohesion is, in principle, fragile (*see Graph 4*).

GRAPH 4 ► Internal cohesion of the political groups in all political areas 2009-2013



Data: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini and Valentin Kreilinger

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The internal cohesion of the political groups within the EP is indeed high, and this reflects the existence of structured partisan groups, in competition with each other to influence the adoption of votes as they are currently in competition, battling for the votes of EU citizens. It is for this reason that it seems very informative to fully analyse the symbolic votes of the 2009-2014 parliamentary term ahead of renewal of the MEPs that will take place in May 2014 (*see Part 2*).

The European Parliament also functions on the basis of a majority-based logic

Furthermore, the EP functions quite conventionally on the basis of a majority-based logic, for almost all decisions that it has to make. As in all assemblies, the majority of voters wins the decision, which should mean that the MEPs belonging to the various groups forming the parliamentary majority are almost alone in being able to influence the votes. This majority-based logic however is much more flexible than at national parliaments level, as the EP does not, strictly speaking, have to support a government: after the initial investiture of the Commission and its possible censure (which has never happened), the political groups are therefore confronted with a much more open political game, which leads them to negotiate their position on a case-by-case basis for a particular vote.

No political group alone holds a majority of seats, given the proportional representation system in place to elect MEPs, which often leads to the creation of 7 to 10 groups²². These political groups are thus called on to defend their respective positions and then to subsequently reconcile them to try to reach the majority thresholds necessary to adopt votes. Observation of political practices within the EP shows in this regard that the negotiations mobilise more often than not the representatives of the main political groups (especially EPP and S&D), who define the positions of compromise to which the other political groups can choose to adhere or not.

The expression of these partisan divides is not based on a systematic binary logic, with one side supporting a “government” and the other side opposing it, for reasons that are political, institutional and legal.

²². Source: European Parliament, “[Composition of Parliament](#)”; total number of groups excluding non-attached.

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- *Political reasons* on the one hand: a large number of issues that structure national political life (education, security, taxation, social protection, housing, etc), particularly on the basis of left vs. right divides, are not directly dealt with at European level, since the EU has limited powers. Conversely, it is more natural to converge beyond partisan affiliations on issues such as consumer protection or human rights protection, which are often put to the vote of MEPs.
- *Institutional reasons* on the other hand: while it must of course invest the Commission, and has the power to censure it, the EP is in no way obliged to support its initiatives, which on the contrary it must systematically amend, as does the Council of ministers. It is therefore totally natural that the MEPs form “majorities of ideas” in relation to the issues and the votes, when on the contrary the defection of a particular member of a majority-based group is sometimes seen as a political cataclysm in countries with a more binary logic, such as France or the United Kingdom.
- *Legal reasons* last of all: the relative vigour of expression of partisan divides also stems from the voting rules in force within the EP, and that appear as an impediment to the constitution of a clear partisan majority (See Annex 3). The MEPs often have to decide by a majority vote of MEPs (and not just of those present), or sometimes even reach a two-thirds majority. Even though the rate of absenteeism during voting is not very high (in the region of 10% to 20%), and even is often better than that recorded in national parliaments, such voting rules raise the necessary threshold to form a political majority and automatically encourage the expression of trans-partisan choices.

2. MEPs forming variable-geometry majorities

The way in which EP political groups take a position to attain majority votes provides extremely informative keys to understanding the functioning of the EP from a democratic and civic point of view²³. Building on the approach developed in the study published at the time of the previous European elections²⁴, we will now present a detailed analysis of the way that partisan divides have been expressed in the EP throughout the parliamentary term that is ending, with 21 symbolic votes.

We have already underpinned that the cohesion of political groups is structurally weaker in partisan groups that are more rooted in national models, such as Eurosceptics or far-right groups, as can be seen in the low cohesion of MEPs in EFD group. It is also important to underpin that the cohesion of political groups of the EP can also be weakened at certain times, not only because of the defection of certain MEPs, but also due to the defection of particular national delegations. This defection may stem from ideological differences within a same political group: the socialism of the French Parti socialiste (PS) can for example be distinguished from the socialism of the British Labour Party. This defection may also be based on specific national or governmental interests: an example is the vote of the Portuguese (and Spanish) socialists in favour of President Barroso taking office in 2009, while the majority of their political group was not in agreement. These specific cases of national or personal defection are however qualify as an exception (we will mention them in the examples later) and do not hinder the expression of partisan divides structured by competition of EP political groups.

It is possible to highlight the strength of these partisan divides based on the work of VoteWatch Europe, which analyses regularly and extensively the way in which MEPs express their choices in roll-call votes to which they are

23. See S. Hix, A. Noury, G. Roland, *Dimensions of Politics in the European Parliament*, Cambridge University Press 2007.

24. Y. Bertoincini and T. Chopin, "European Elections: the time for choice - the French case", *Note No. 45*, May 2009, Robert Schuman Foundation, pp. 46-67. We can also refer to T. Chopin and C. Lépinay, "Political Splits and Compromise in the European Parliament: voting in Strasbourg", *Questions d'Europe* No. 190, Robert Schuman Foundation, December 2010.

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summoned during the plenary sessions of their assembly throughout its parliamentary term (more than 6,000 roll-call votes from 2009 to 2014 on more than 1,000 different issues).

VoteWatch Europe used precise and proven methods to attain its data. These methods have their clearly assumed limits because it is extremely difficult to obtain an exhaustive analysis of all MEPs' positions. This initiative provides however information for analysis that is particularly useful from a civic standpoint (*see Box 1 for more details*).

BOX 1 ▶ **VoteWatch Europe and roll-call votes**

Roll-call votes, which make it possible to know exactly who voted for what in the EP, account for about a third of MEPs' votes during plenary sessions. The other votes are cast via a show of hands, the session President having to visually decide where the majority lies.

It is important to point out that whether to request a roll-call vote or not is a strategic choice of groups. Requesting a roll-call vote can mobilise "the troops" and cohesion of their MEPs on sensitive issues. Not requesting this type of vote may discourage MEPs from voting in order to avoid backing a difficult outcome to sell politically and in the media. Roll-call votes may also be requested by the session President in case of a doubt about a majority determined in a vote via a show of hands. They nevertheless have both substantial and illustrative political significance and provide extremely informative methods for analysing the partisan divisions at work in the EP.

More than 6,000 roll-call votes out of a total of some 18,000 votes in the EP were analysed by VoteWatch Europe for the 2009-2014 parliamentary term. These roll-call votes cover a broad range of topics since they concern more than 1,000 different economic, social, environmental and diplomatic issues (these 1,000 issues were the most sensitive from the total of 1,500 issues submitted to the EP over the last five years). There are therefore several votes on the same issue, the same report and/or the same text, including on a series of amendments to change a particular provision of a directive or a regulation.

VoteWatch Europe focuses its analyses on the most sensitive votes from a political standpoint on the basis of a choice that is subjective by definition. It summarises the issue of the votes using simply posed questions, while the issues are more complex by nature. VoteWatch Europe also seeks to determine the political and institutional context in which the votes were cast, in order to indicate what conditions could cause MEPs to vote in a relatively binary manner (for, against, abstention, not participating in votes or absence) on the particular issues. It is naturally indispensable to supplement the different background information provided by VoteWatch Europe (and explained below) in order to form an even more informed

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opinion of MEPs' motives behind a particular choice, for example by reading communiqués of EP political groups before or after the votes²⁵.

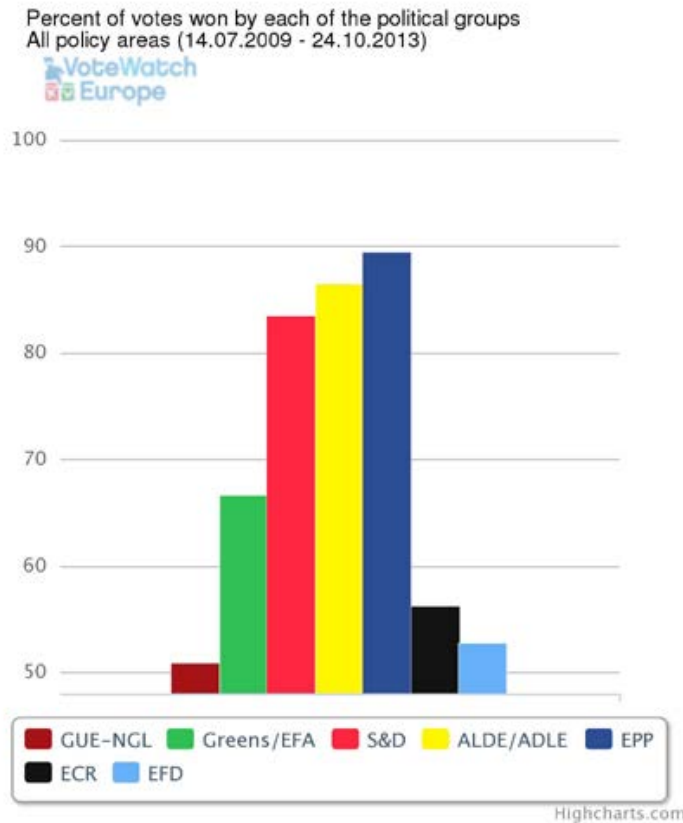
VoteWatch Europe presents its voting analyses by indicating the position expressed by the majority of its political groups and national delegations; it also presents them individually on its website, so that everyone can be informed of the positions expressed by their MEP for each vote analysed. We will address this dual collective and individual approach later when we present the 21 votes selected to highlight a number of symbolic votes cast by French MEPs.

The analysis of data provided by VoteWatch Europe first and foremost measures what political groups won the most votes from 2009 to 2014, and therefore assesses their weight and their responsibilities in the decisions taken by the European Parliament during that period (*see Graph 5*). It is even possible to make a more detailed assessment based on the sectors in which the votes took place, in order to determine the topics of votes that the European People's Party (EPP) and the right most often won or conversely, the topics of votes the group S&D and the left won (*see Annex 4*).

25. The activities of European Parliament political groups can be found on the homepage of the [EP website](#). Non-attached MEPs (MEPs of the Front national from 2009 to 2014) do not form a political group in the strict sense of the word.

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GRAPH 5 ► Percent of votes won by each of the political groups



Source: VoteWatch Europe

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

These variable-geometry majorities naturally emerge on the basis of the issues subject to MEPs’ votes and can be divided into three main types of political divides:

- First, divides based on adhering to the principle of the main dimensions of European integration (European Union, monetary union, single market, Schengen area, etc.): these divisions separate pro-European political groups from those that are against European integration;
- Second, divides on a particular European policy (agricultural policy, financial regulation, trade liberalisation, euro area reform, etc.): these divides separate the EP political groups based on the content of the votes they must cast;

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- Lastly, “institutional” divides, which may lead MEPs to determine their position based on those adopted by the European Commission or Council: these divisions are expressed less often, for example during budgetary votes or those on the EP’s powers or statute.

It could seem relatively easy to transform the different types of political divides into types of partisan divides, by separating for example the far-right parties, centre-right parties and centre-left parties based on whether or not they support European integration. But the binary classification does not take into consideration the fact that, as we have just indicated, even MEPs belonging to minority parties and who are supposedly against European integration have been seen to vote in favour of 40% of decisions taken by the EP, aligning their votes with those of the so-called pro-European parties.

Against this backdrop, with the analysis of data provided by VoteWatch Europe we can also note that the competition-negotiation dynamic between the EP political groups has actually led to the formation of three main types of majorities (see Table 7):

- Trans-partisan “consensus majorities”, which include MEPs from most political groups – they account for 40% of votes (§ 2.1);
- “Grand-coalition majorities”, which mainly include MEPs from EPP, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) and Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) groups and account for approximately 30% of votes (§ 2.2)²⁶;
- “Confrontation majorities”, which include MEPs from a centre-right coalition or a centre-left coalition, and account for approximately 30% of votes (§ 2.3).

26. Grand-coalition majorities” could also be called “confrontation majorities” between pro-European groups and Eurosceptic or anti-European groups, but this divide is not the most important factor in the functioning of the European Parliament.

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TABLE 7 ▶ Roll-call votes in the European Parliament
 Variable-geometry majorities from 2009 to 2014

	CONSENSUS MAJORITIES	GRAND-COALITION MAJORITIES	CONFRONTATION MAJORITIES
Proportion of votes	40%	30%	30%
Political groups concerned	All	EPP, S&D, ALDE even Greens and ECR	EPP, ALDE even ECR or S&D-ALDE-Greens even GUE
Main French political parties concerned	Front de gauche - PS MoDem-UDI UMP-MPF FN	PS MoDem-UDI UMP even Verts	UMP-MoDem-UDI or PS-MoDem-UDI-Greens even Front de gauche
Voting issues (examples)	GMOs Food aid ACTA Seat of the European Parliament	Banking Union EU budget CAP Border control	Liberalisation of services EU-USA trade Maternity leave Biofuels

Data: VoteWatch Europe; Table: Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin

As we will see later, it is not always easy to establish coherent types of majorities from a political standpoint, by saying for example that the left and right join forces on international issues and oppose each other when it comes to social issues. They can oppose each other when the votes are being negotiated, but choose to work out a compromise or not, and therefore ultimately opt for a grand-coalition majority or a confrontation majority, on the basis of the power dynamics at play.

It is therefore necessary to start with a detailed analysis of a number of symbolic votes chosen to better illustrate the variable nature of majorities formed within the EP, from which we can identify more informative keys to understanding from a political standpoint. And it is by focusing on some 21 symbolic votes cast by French MEPs that we are able to provide even more familiar information from a civic standpoint.

2.1. The weight of consensus majorities

Most political groups represented in the EP often join forces to adopt or reject proposals that are submitted by the European Commission or resolutions that are proposed by a particular political group. Around 40% of roll-call votes analysed by VoteWatch Europe result in the formation of trans-partisan majorities, rallying over 500 of the 751 votes cast in the EP, and what we are calling “consensus majorities”.

2.1.1. Votes rallying MEPs from most political groups

In the EP, it is not always easy to distinguish “consensus majorities” from “very grand-coalition” majorities, including when we focus on The vote of MEPs elected in France. We have however chosen to distinguish these two types of majorities based on the following criteria:

- In the case of “consensus majorities”, almost all of the French (and often European) MEPs vote in the same way (unanimous votes being extremely rare): even MEPs of the Front de gauche and Front national, who are often opposed to other groups, take a similar position to that of nearly all of the French MEPs;
- “Very grand-coalition” majorities rally many more MEPs than those from EPP, S&D and ALDE. They also include the Greens and are able to rally more than two thirds, even three quarters, of French MEPs. However, they are not supported by the Front de gauche and Front national MEPs.

We will now present a number of symbolic votes for which consensus majorities emerged in the EP between French MEPs, and that could be divided into two main categories:

- Votes on issues for which French MEPs defend specific national interests, and for a very large majority, to the extent of them taking a position that can differ from that of their political group: maintaining EP seat in Strasbourg is a typical example of this type of vote (*see Box 2 and Graph 6a*).

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- Votes on issues that have sparked very few ideological divisions or for which there is ideological convergence of French MEPs: when it comes to protect consumers (vote on GMOs), citizens (vote on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) or the most deprived persons (vote on the food aid programme) or tackling excessive financial speculation, a very large majority of French (and European) MEPs adopt a similar position.

BOX 2 ► **Defence of the EP headquarters in Strasbourg:
a (nearly) sacred union of French MEPs**

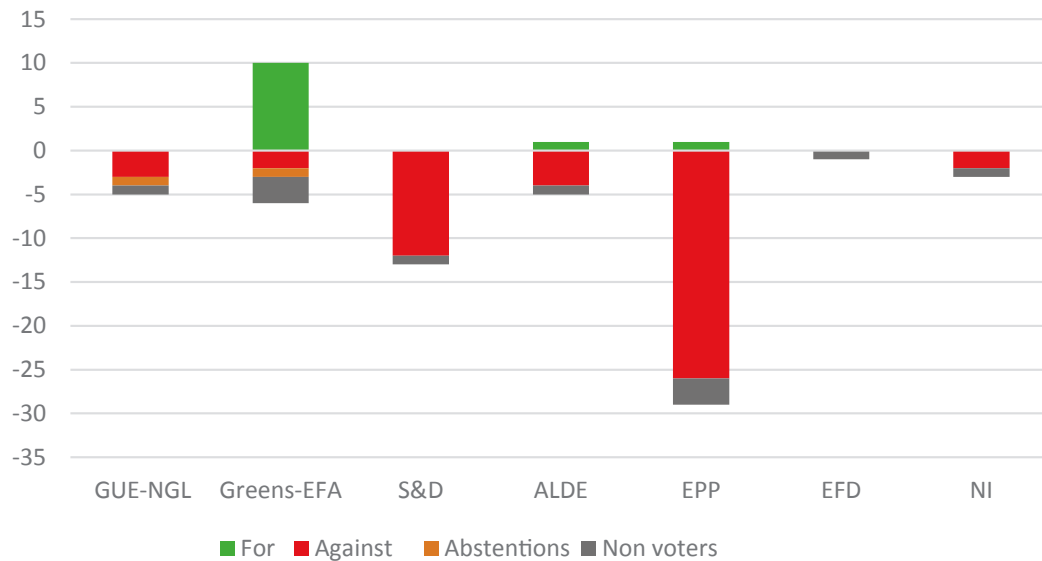
The proposal to group EP activities in Brussels has been debated various times at Community level and has generated votes on resolutions that are not legally binding. Transferring the EP headquarters from Strasbourg to Brussels would indeed require an amendment to the treaties (and therefore the agreement of French national authorities).

The most recent vote on this issue took place in the autumn of 2013 and almost all of the French MEPs were opposed (*see Graph 6a*). This opposing position is especially noteworthy in that French MEPs have systematically departed from the position defined by their political group in favour of a transfer of EP seat (*see Graph 6b*).

However it is important to point out that half of the French MEPs from the Greens voted along the lines of their group, in other words in favour of this transfer, but also that the other half chose not to do so.

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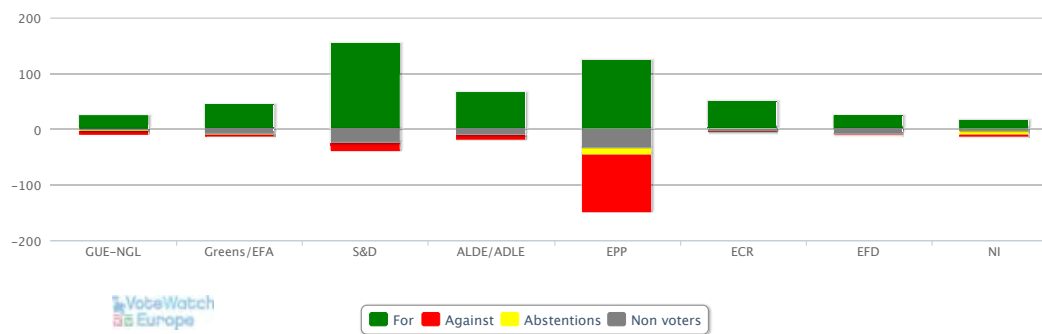
GRAPH 6a ▶ Should the seat of the European Parliament be transferred from Strasbourg to Brussels? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini
 NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

GRAPH 6b ▶ Should the seat of the European Parliament be transferred from Strasbourg to Brussels? The vote of all MEPs

Draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 - all sections - Motion for resolution : Paragraph 90
 Power table by EPGs



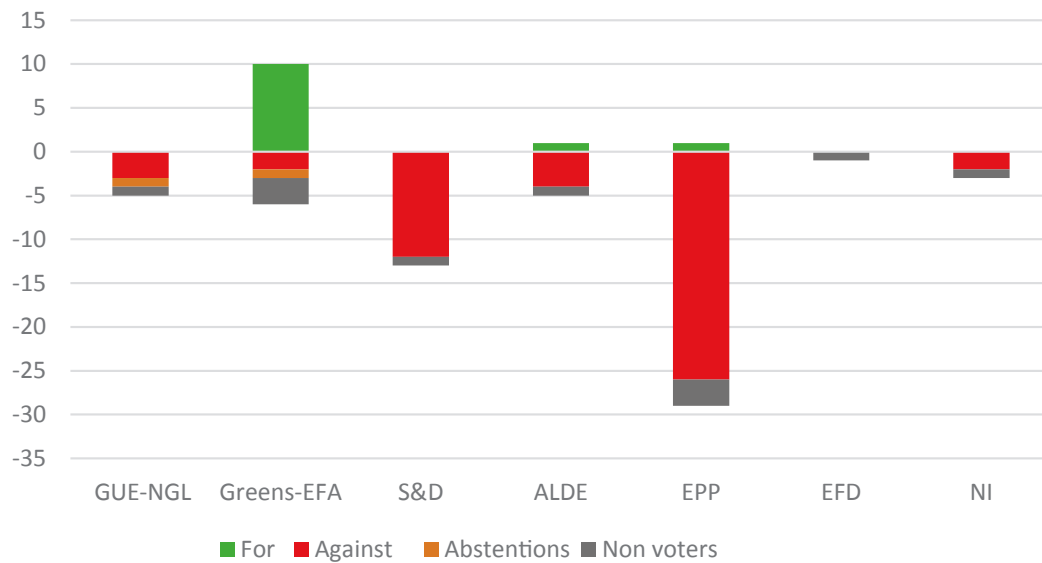
Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini
 NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

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2.1.2. Important consensus votes from 2009 to 2014

Four other symbolic examples can give an idea of the issues on which a consensus majority could be formed in the EP during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term in order to adopt more than one third of the roll-call votes. These votes concern respectively the maintenance of a European Aid Programme for the Most Deprived, the prohibition of GMO cultivation, the introduction of a European Financial Transaction Tax, and the rejection of the International Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (see Graphs 7a to 7d).

GRAPH 7a ► Should a Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived be created?
The vote of MEPs elected in France



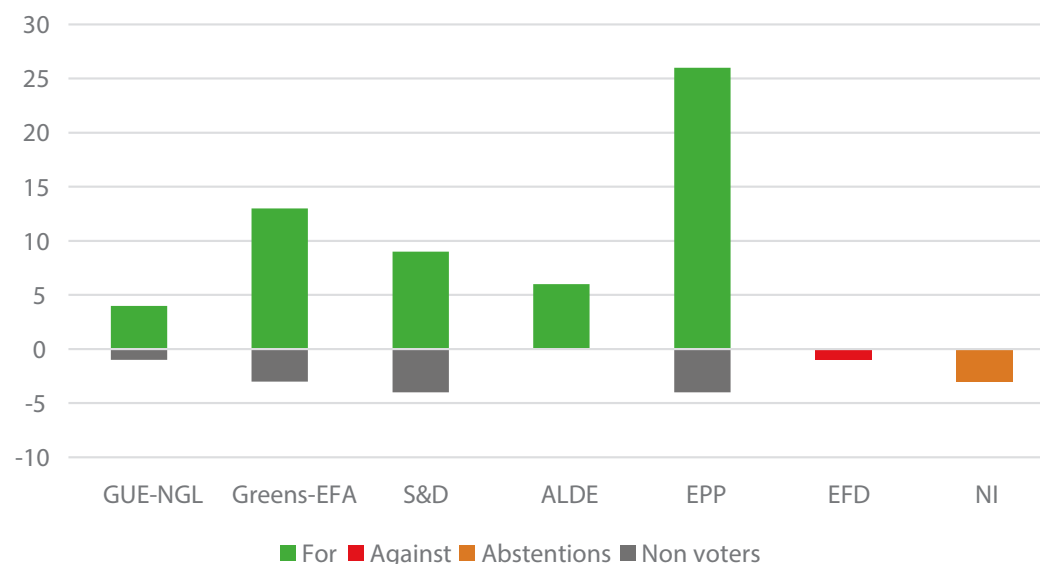
Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini
NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In February 2014, the EP approved an informal agreement concluded with the Council in December 2013 on the **creation of a Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)**. The FEAD aims to provide non-financial assistance to the poorest citizens, by providing them with food and other basic necessities. This new fund, which will raise a total of €3.5 billion for the period 2014-2020, will replace the former Food Distribution Programme for the Most Deprived Persons of the Community, whose existence was challenged by a decision of the Court of Justice pointing to the absence of the appropriate legal basis.

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All of the French MEPs chose to approve the creation of the FEAD, with the exception of the MPF MEP, who abstained (*see Graph 7a*). This vote was also supported by most political groups in the EP (592 votes for, 61 against): only European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) was opposed, and most MEPs from Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) abstained during the final vote²⁷.

GRAPH 7B ► Should a new Financial Transaction Tax be imposed on all financial transactions within the EU? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In May 2012, MEPs voted on a draft **Financial Transaction Tax (FTT)**, to be collected by EU member states under a special legislative procedure (Parliament consultation).

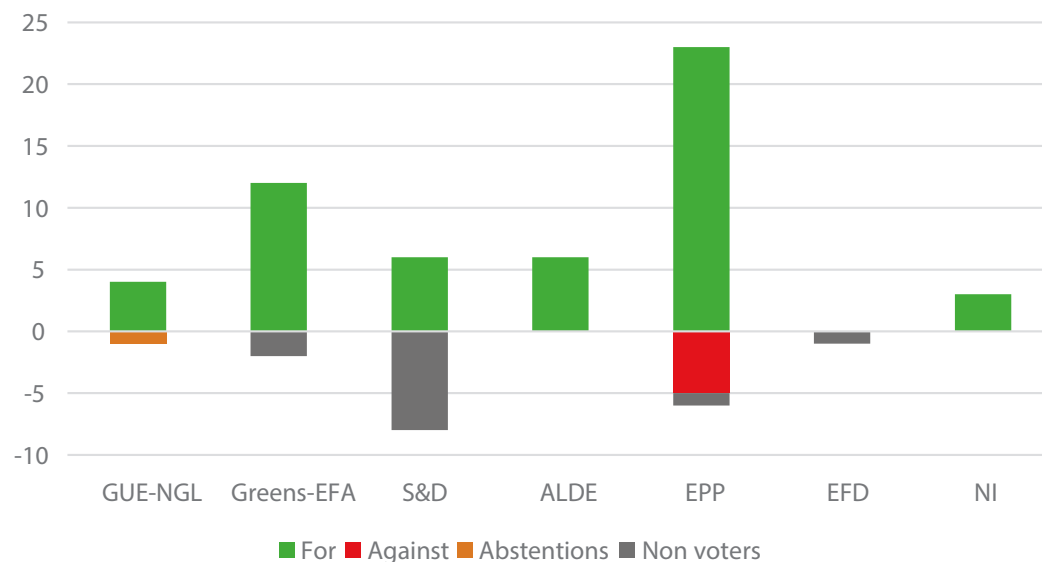
All of the French MEPs chose to approve this draft, with the exception of the MPF MEP, who voted against, and three Front national MEPs, who abstained (*see Graph 7b*). This nearly unanimous vote contrasts with the more divided nature of other national delegations, since this vote was won by a European

²⁷ The description of the issues related to the 21 votes presented herein is very directly based on the presentation provided by VoteWatch Europe, who we thank very much.

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grand-coalition majority (and not a consensus one) of 487 votes (see Annex 5)²⁸. A significant minority of 152 MEPs from ECR, EFD and ALDE (with the exception of the French, Italian and Finnish members) voted against this proposal, along with 20 EPP MEPs from Malta, Cyprus, Sweden and Latvia, and six S&D MEPs from Malta and Cyprus.

GRAPH 7c ▶ Should the EU restrict the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In July 2011, the EP adopted a legislative resolution on the **possibility for member states to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in their territory**. The objective of this resolution was to protect the environment, health and consumers interests, while ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market. The key vote analysed by VoteWatch Europe was related to the legal provisions that the member states can use to prohibit GMOs. Although the European Commission’s proposal indicated that the member states may invoke reasons going beyond considerations relating to the environment or human health protection in order to prohibit the cultivation of GMOs,

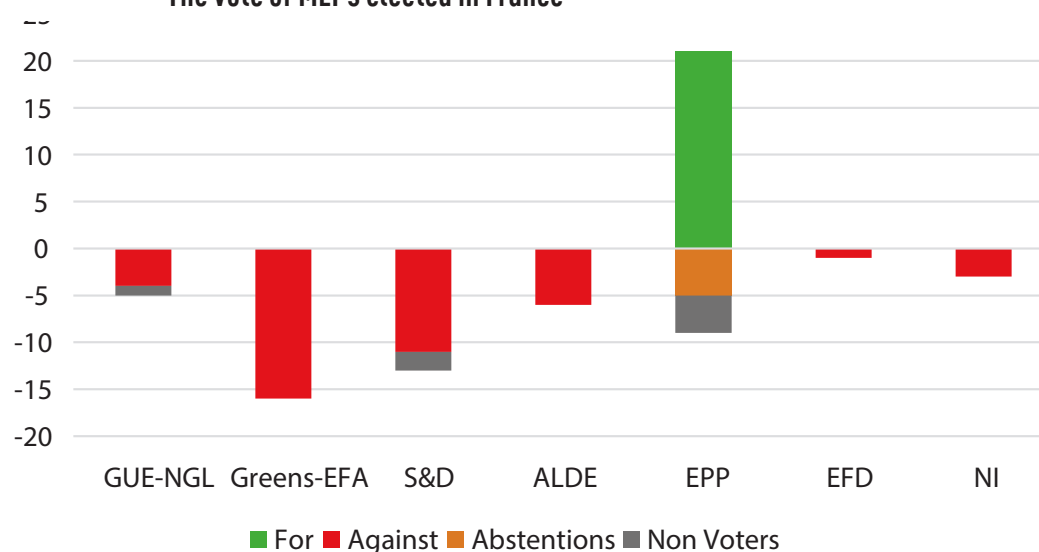
²⁸. Since the Council failed to vote unanimously, an enhanced cooperation procedure was launched by 11 member states that wished to apply this FTI (Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia).

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an amendment of the EP proposed that the member states be authorised to invoke potentially negative environmental repercussions. It was also indicated that the list of legal provisions should explicitly include the socio-economic impact and town and country planning.

Nearly all of the French MEPs chose to vote in favour of this resolution, with the exception of a few MEPs from UMP (*see Graph 7d*). This nearly unanimous vote differs from the much more divided nature of the EP (*see Annex 5*), since this vote was won by a European centre-left majority (and not a consensus) comprised of MEPs from ALDE, S&D, G/EFA and GUE/NGL, joined by EFD and MEPs from EPP (mainly among Austrian, German, Greek and Hungarian delegations).

GRAPH 7d ▶ Should the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) be adopted?
 The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In July 2012, the EP decided not to approve the **Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA)** between the EU and its member states, Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States of America²⁹. The MEPs expressed their concerns about data protection, fundamental liberties, and the launch and transparency of ACTA negotiations.

²⁹. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EP has had the power to approve or reject trade agreements, but it cannot change them.

This vote also reflects a relatively consensual position of French MEPs, since it rallied MEPs from all the political groups and those who are not attached, in other words from the Front national (*see Graph 7d*). However, it is important to highlight that this consensus majority is very incomplete since dissimilar votes were cast by the right-wing MEPs (19 UMP MEPs for, three abstentions and three non-votes; one Gauche moderne MEP for, another abstained; one Nouveau centre MEP abstained and another chose not to vote). Overall in the EP (*see Annex 5*), 39 MEPs voted for and 478 voted against, while 165 abstained, the majority of whom were members of EPP and ECR.

2.2. The domination of “grand-coalition” majorities

More than two thirds of the roll-call votes analysed by VoteWatch Europe reflect the formation of “grand-coalition” majorities in the EP, in other words, majorities formed on the basis of negotiation between EPP and S&D. That is because, as we have just seen, MEPs from other political groups, including the Front de gauche and the Front national, often rally together for these votes. Therefore, more than half of them are *de facto* categorised as “consensus majorities”, and only the other half (in other words, one third) can be put in the category of “grand-coalition majorities” in the strict sense.

Within this category, we can also separate the decisions adopted without votes from the radical left and the far-right, but with those of at least two other groups (particularly the European Greens and ALDE), which reflects the formation of a “very grand-coalition” majority, while those mainly rallying EPP and S&D groups (with the almost systematic help from ALDE MEPs) result from “grand-coalition majorities” in the strict sense.

In this context, numerous examples can illustrate the issues on which broad- and very grand-coalition majorities could be formed in the EP during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, making it very difficult to categorise them according to partisan types. Even if we highlight the issues on which it was impossible to form a grand-coalition, and which lead to a formation of left vs. right majorities (*see § 2.3*), it is difficult to identify topics for which we can see the systematic formation of a grand-coalition or, conversely, that of majorities based on a left vs. right division (for example, in economic, social or environmental matters).

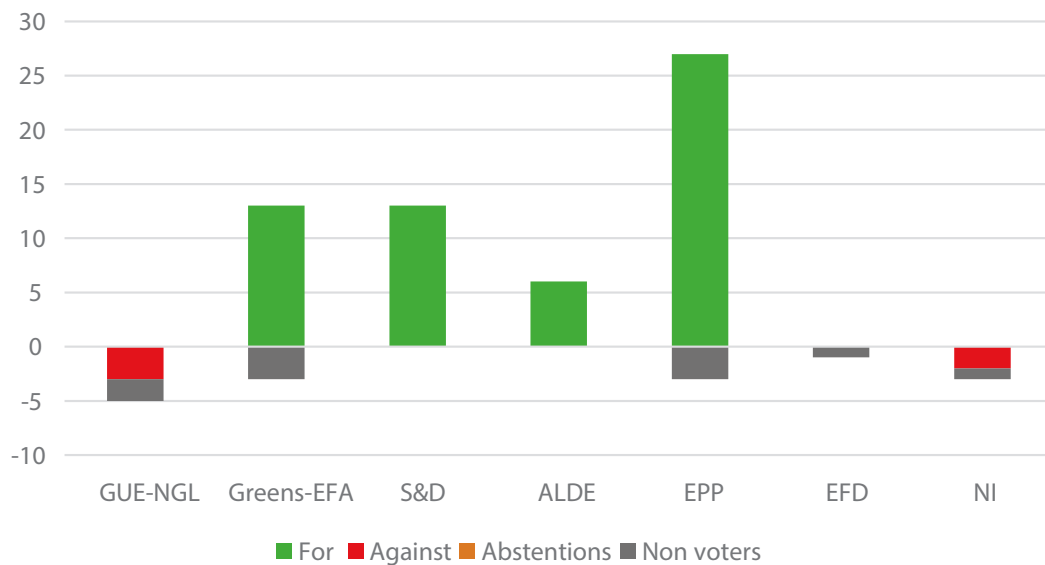
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Based on the illustrative dimension of the nine votes selected for this study, French and European citizens can nevertheless form an opinion on reasons why their MEPs may have aligned their votes from 2009 to 2014, particularly those relating to the financial, economic and social crises the EU has experienced, but also other symbolic votes.

2.2.1. Grand-coalition majorities to deepen the EMU

Looking at three votes cast during the financial, economic, social and even political crisis the EU has experienced, we can see that very grand-coalition majorities led to the adoption of positions fostering enhanced integration within the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU): the first on the creation of a banking union, the second on the pooling of the debts of member states and the third on reform of the Stability and Growth Pact (see Graphs 8a to 8c).

GRAPH 8a ► Should the EU create a banking union? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

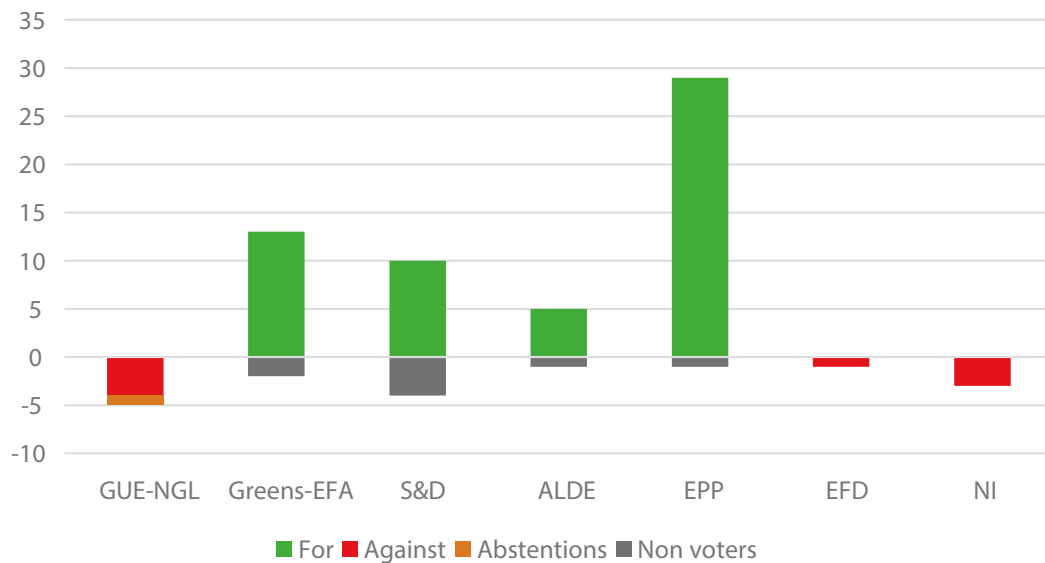
In September 2013, the EP adopted a legislative package to establish **one of the three pillars of the banking union, namely a Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM)**. An agreement between these two institutions increased

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the EP’s supervisory powers with regard to the ECB, since MEPs would have increased access to information and would be authorised to hold meetings with members of the Supervisory Board. The EP will also have to approve the nomination of SSM director general.

A very large majority of French MEPs therefore chose to vote in favour of this proposal to implement a banking union since only the MEPs from the Front de gauche and Front national voted against (see Graph 8b). We can see a large majority of this type throughout the EP (see Annex 5).

GRAPH 8b ▶ Should the euro area member states pool their public debts by creating eurobonds? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini
NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

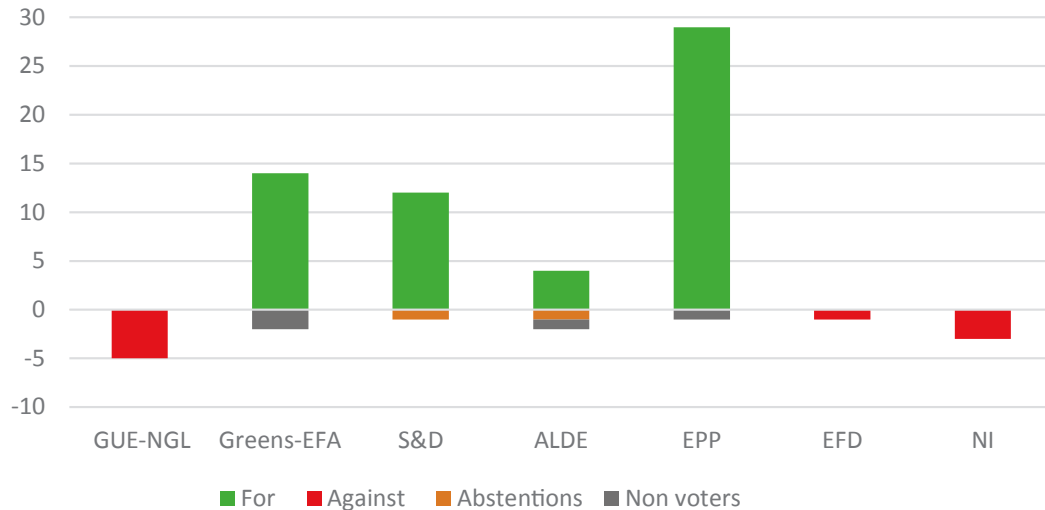
In February 2012, the EP responded for the first time to the European Commission’s Green Paper proposing the **issuance of Eurobonds**. Eurobonds (or “stability bonds” according to the Green Paper) are collective bonds aiming to “pool sovereign debt among EU member states and share the associated revenue flows and debt-servicing costs”.

A very large majority of French MEPs chose to approve this proposal, since only the Front de gauche, Front national and MPF MEPs voted against (see

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Graph 8b). In the EP, S&D and G/EFA, as well as the majority of EPP and ALDE MEPs also voted in favour of the resolution (see Annex 5); 29 German and Swedish MEPs from EPP voted against, along with MEPs from ECR and most MEPs from GUE/NGL and EFD; 19 ALDE MEPs, mainly Germans, abstained.

GRAPH 8c ▶ Should the European Commission strengthen the supervision of budgetary and economic policies of euro area member states? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In March 2013, the EP adopted two reports with regard to the Two-Pack legislative package that aims to strengthen **European legislation in the area of economic surveillance**. The first report establishes stricter economic and budgetary surveillance rules for member states in the euro area experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability. The second report focuses on establishing common procedures for monitoring and evaluating draft budgets. It also establishes rules to ensure that national budgets are consistent with economic policy guidelines adopted within the framework of the European Semester for the surveillance of economic and budgetary policies.

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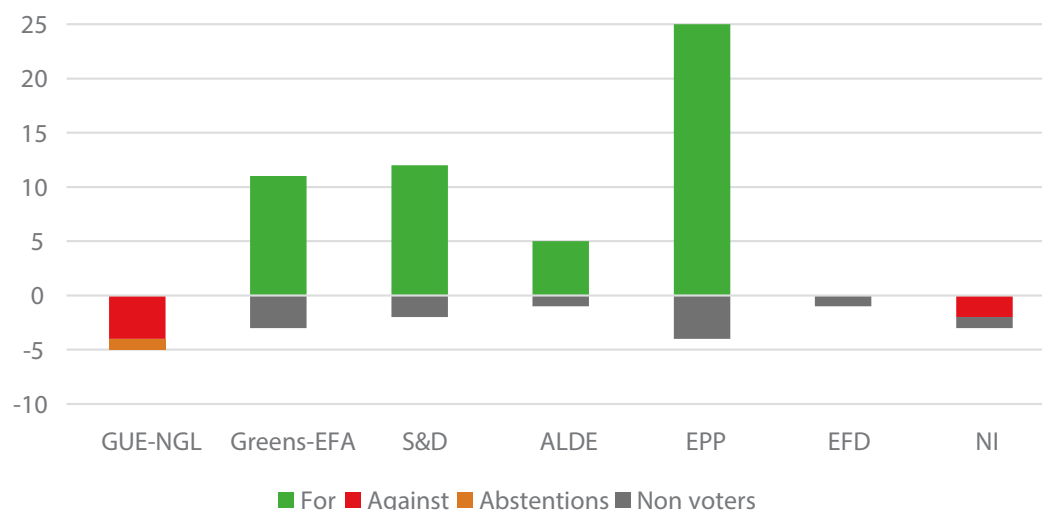
A French grand-coalition majority emerged to support the second reform of the Stability and Growth Pact³⁰, while French MEPs were more strongly opposed on the first reform in 2011 (under the “Six-Pack”), as we will see later (*see Graph 12c*). The Front de gauche, MPF and Front national MEPs voted against, while MoDem and PS MEPs abstained and four MEPs present did not participate in the vote: one MoDem, two Verts and one UMP (*see Graph 8c*). This vote of French MEPs is more or less in line with the one cast by MEPs in other national delegations belonging to the same political groups (*see Annex 5*).

2.2.2. Grand-coalition majorities on inter-institutional issues

Three votes on “inter-institutional” issues can also be mentioned to illustrate the formation of grand-coalition majorities in the EP and reflect a widely shared desire of MEPs to promote the powers of their institution. The first relates to the creation of a European External Action Service, regarding which MEPs were led to affirm their monitoring and decision-making powers, particularly regarding the budget. The two other votes concern EU financing (ways to allocate expenditure and raise revenue), which is traditionally an area in which the European Parliament asserts its power vis-à-vis the Council and Commission (*see Graphs 9a to 9d*).

³⁰. According to VoteWatch Europe, S&D and G/EFA MEPs voted for this second reform undoubtedly because the new legislation focuses more on the role of growth and employment indicators in the surveillance of economic performances of member states.

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GRAPH 9a ▶ Should the EU have its own diplomatic service? The vote of MEPs elected in France


Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

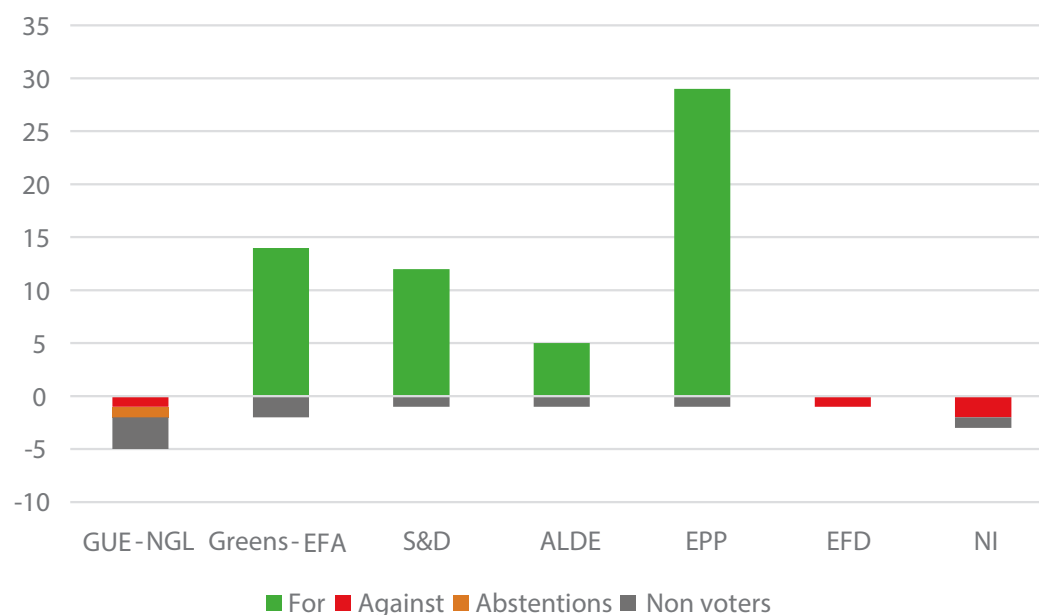
NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

The European External Action Service (EEAC) was provided for by the Lisbon Treaty to act as the diplomatic service for the EU, under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The EP was consulted in July 2010 with regard to a package of recommendations on the organisation and responsibility of the diplomatic service of the EU. It adopted the proposal, with its amendments on the structure and the organisational functions of the service, instruments of external action and financial and budgetary responsibility of the EEAC.

A very large majority of French MEPs therefore chose to vote in favour of this proposal, in line with the position of the EP as a whole (*see Annex 5*): only the Front de gauche and Front national MEPs voted against, while a Parti communiste MEP from the Reunion abstained and MEPs from several other political groups did not participate in the vote (*see Graph 9a*).

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GRAPH 9b ► Should the EU have a genuine system of “own resources” for its budget?
 The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

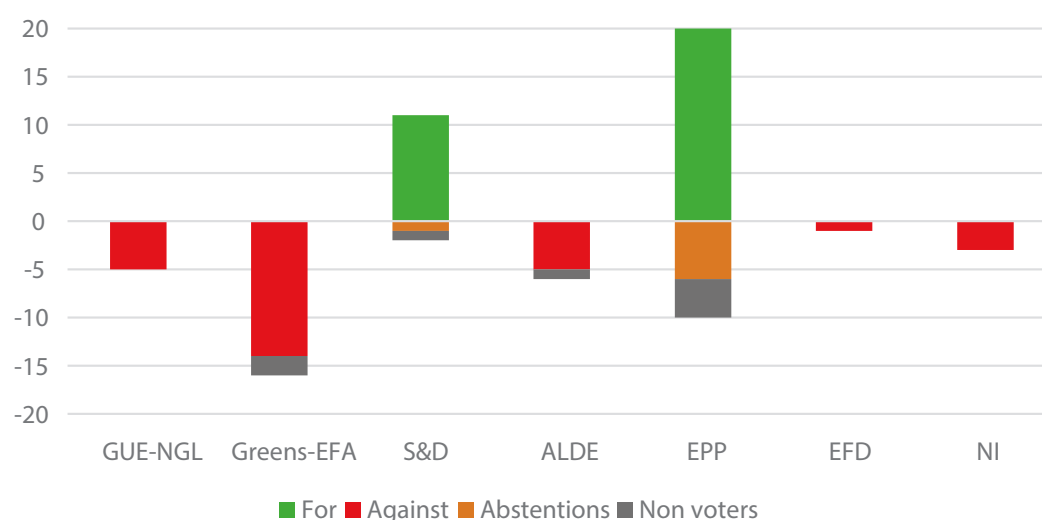
In March 2013, the EP was called on to vote on a legislative resolution on the future financing of the EU and, more specifically, the **increase of its own resources**. According to the terms of this resolution, the EU’s dependence on national contributions contradicts the Treaty and may be particularly detrimental when economic crises seriously affect national economies. The EP is therefore asked to support the Commission’s proposal concerning reform of the budget financing system, and to approve the introduction of new and genuine own resources, such as the financial transaction tax or a new European value added tax.

A very large majority of French MEPs chose to vote in favour of the creation of new own resources: only one Front de gauche MEP, two Front national MEPs and the MPF MEP voted against, while another Front de gauche MEP abstained and MEPs from several political groups did not participate in the vote (*see Graph 9b*). This vote of French MEPs is in line with the positions taken by the EP as a whole (more than 530 votes for, on the basis of a large majority

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formed by MEPS from EPP, S&D, ALDE, G/EFA and GUE/NGL) (see Annex 5) although a significant number of Swedish and Danish MEPs from these groups voted against this resolution or abstained.

GRAPH 9c ▶ Should the EU budget be increased and made more flexible?
 The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In November 2013, the EP approved a **Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 (MFF)** following long and difficult negotiations with member states. The multiannual budget will decrease in absolute value compared to 2007-2013, reaching €960 billion in commitment appropriations and €908 billion for payment. The MEPs managed to obtain several important concessions for member states: flexibility between financial exercises and budget lines, a promise to create a high-level group on EU own resources and a review clause stipulating that the Commission will have to present a review of the MFF in 2016.

A small French grand-coalition majority with only 20 UMP MEPs and 11 socialist MEPs emerged in order to support the adoption of this Multiannual Financial Framework. Most of the other French MEPs voted against this adoption, while five centrist MEPs abstained and only 8 other MEPs did not participate in the vote (see Graph 9c). This vote of French delegations differs from

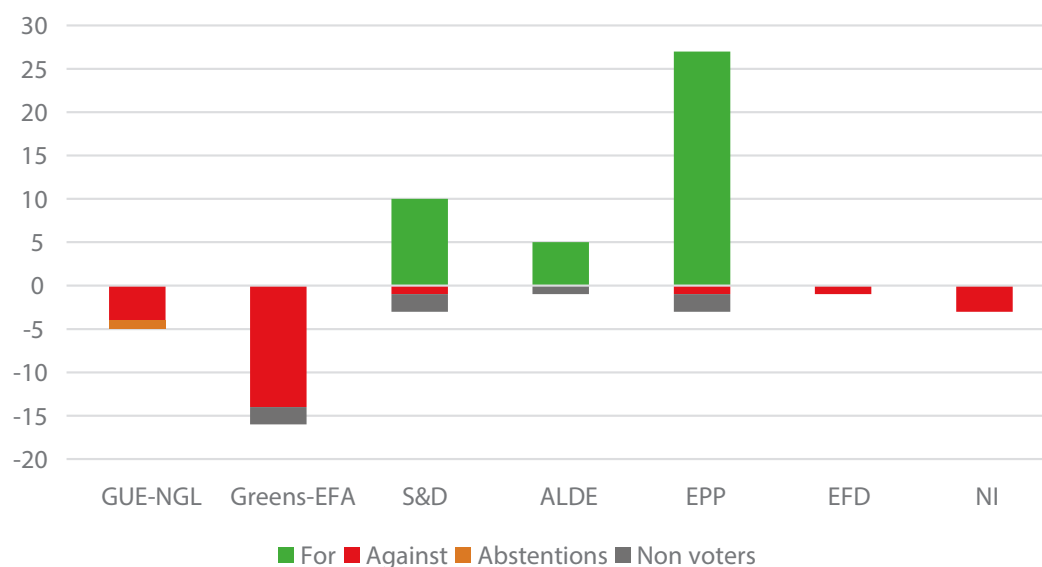
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that of other MEPs, since the text as a whole was supported by a comfortable majority (EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR) passing with 537 votes for and 126 against (mainly from G/EFA, GUE/NGL and EFD) and 19 abstentions (*see Annex 5*).

2.2.3. Grand-coalition majorities on variable issues

Three other votes on various issues can be mentioned to illustrate the formation of grand-coalition majorities mainly comprised of French MEPs from EPP and S&D groups, with additional support from all or a portion of ALDE MEPs. The first vote is on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); the second is on rules on the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders; and the third is on nuclear energy (*see Graphs 10a to 10c*).

GRAPH 10a ▶ Should agricultural subsidies remain a budgetary priority for the EU?
The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

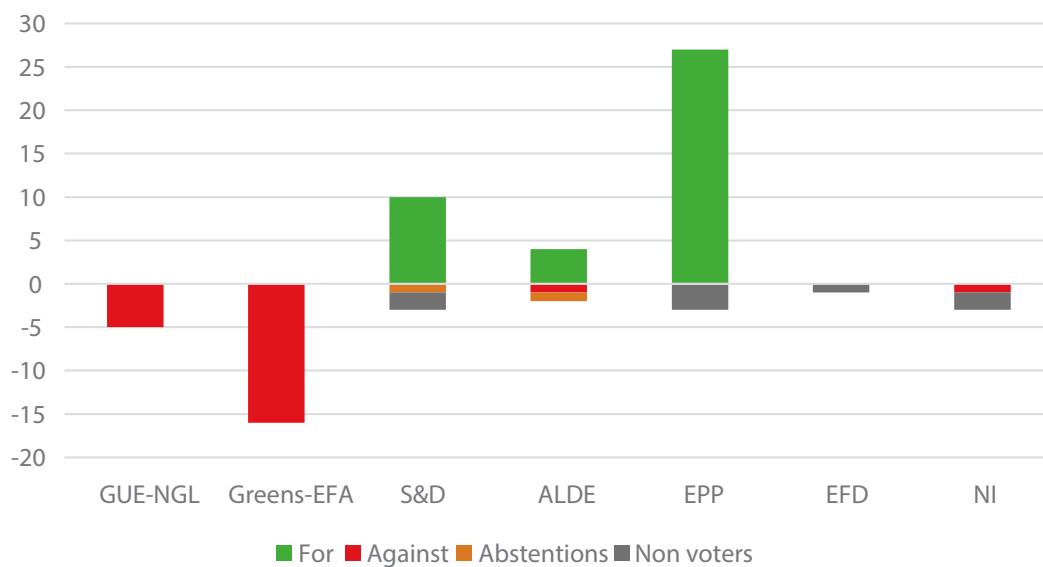
The **new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** was adopted in June 2013 by the EP after reaching a compromise with the Council on the most important topics. The five legislative reports adopted by MEPs proposed a reform on the financing, management and monitoring of the CAP, direct payments to farmers, rural development and the agricultural market. This CAP reform is expected

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to produce a fairer and more transparent distribution of EU subsidies between member states and farmers, as well as better protection of the environment.

A French grand-coalition majority comprised of French MEPs from EPP groups, 10 socialist MEPs and nearly all the centrist MEPs voted in favour of this reform, while most of the other French MEPs voted against (*see Graph 10a*). The report on financing, management and monitoring of the CAP was approved by the EP with 500 votes for, 177 against and 10 abstentions (*see Annex 5*). It was mainly supported by EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR. However, S&D votes were divided, six delegations (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Austria) joined the G/EFA, GUE/NGL and EFD in voting against.

GRAPH 10b ▶ Should the EU authorise the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

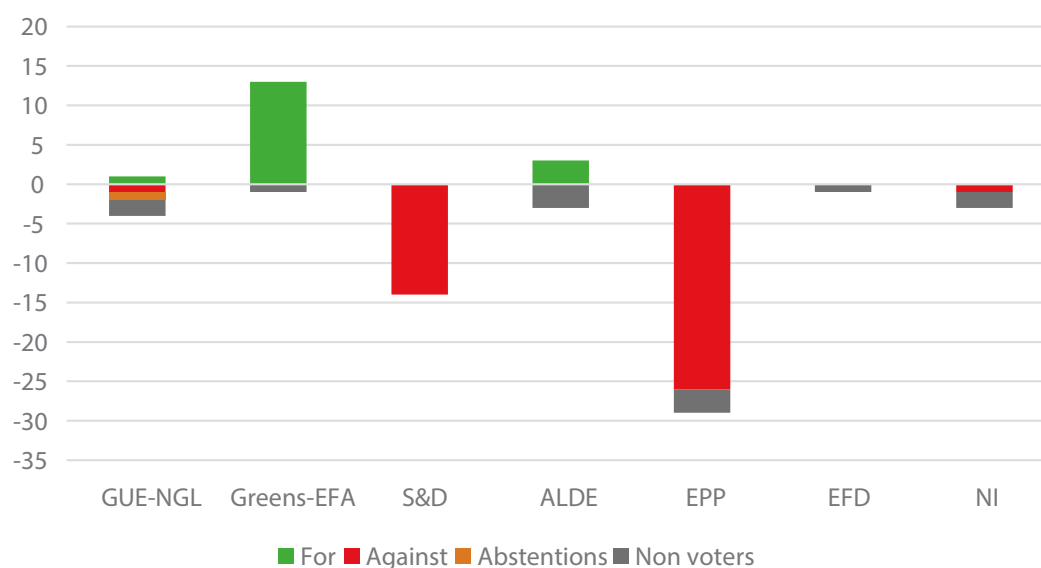
In June 2013, the EP adopted a legislative resolution on the common rules on the **temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders**. This resolution requires enhanced protection of the right of European citizens to move freely within the Schengen area and better evaluation to verify the application of the Schengen acquis. It provides that the reintroduction of

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border controls at internal borders in the Schengen area is only possible for security reasons, in exceptional circumstances, such as considerable shortcomings noted by the Schengen evaluation mechanism or in the event of a serious threat to internal borders.

A French grand-coalition majority was formed to approve this resolution (see Graph 10b) in line with the overall position of other MEPs (see Annex 5). Nearly all French MEPs approved it, while Front de gauche and Europe Écologie MEPs voted against, along with three Front national MEPs, and the other two did not participate in the vote³¹.

GRAPH 10c ▶ Should the EU abandon nuclear energy? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In November 2011, MEPs were asked to adopt, as part of a consultation procedure, the proposal for a decision of the Council on the framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) for **nuclear research and training activities**. This European framework programme

³¹. This typically refers to a kind of vote in which the MEPs from the Front de gauche and Verts on the one hand and the Front national on the other, have undoubtedly voted against for different reasons: the former to challenge the overly broad conditions concerning the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders, the latter to challenge the very existence of these conditions and the absence of these types of controls on a permanent basis.

determines the different research activities in the area of nuclear energy and radiation protection and the budget allocated to them. The key vote analysed by VoteWatch Europe concerns Amendment 36, drafted by the G/EFA group, whose purpose was to have the EU commit to abandoning nuclear energy.

A French grand-coalition majority emerged to vote against this amendment: UMP and socialist MEPs actually voted against; centrist MEPs were divided with votes against, for and abstention; United Left MEPs either voted against, abstained or did not participate in the vote; French MEPs from the five political groups and non-attached MEPs (ie, the Front national) also decided not to participate in the vote (*see Graph 10c*).

It is interesting to note that this French grand-coalition majority differs from the centre-right majority that emerged in the EP to reject this proposal (*see Annex 5*): it was supported by MEPs from GUE/NGL and G/EFA, as well as two thirds of the S&D group and nearly half of MEPs from ALDE; but MEPs from EPP (with the exception of the Austrian delegation), ECR and EFD, along with most of ALDE MEPs voted against (the amendment was rejected by a total of 210 votes for and 356 votes against).

2.3. Left vs. right “confrontation” majorities

Slightly under a third of votes analysed by VoteWatch Europe reflect the formation of confrontation majorities, on the basis of a left vs. right division or more precisely a centre-right vs. centre-left division (ALDE often playing a pivotal role). Some 15% of these votes are indeed won by a centre-right majority (EPP, ALDE, ECR), 15% by a centre-left majority (S&D, ALDE, Greens and the radical left).

VoteWatch Europe data and the examples presented below show that these “confrontation majorities” most often occur when economic, social (even societal) and environmental issues are involved. Although, as we have seen, it is not impossible for grand-coalition votes to emerge on these issues.

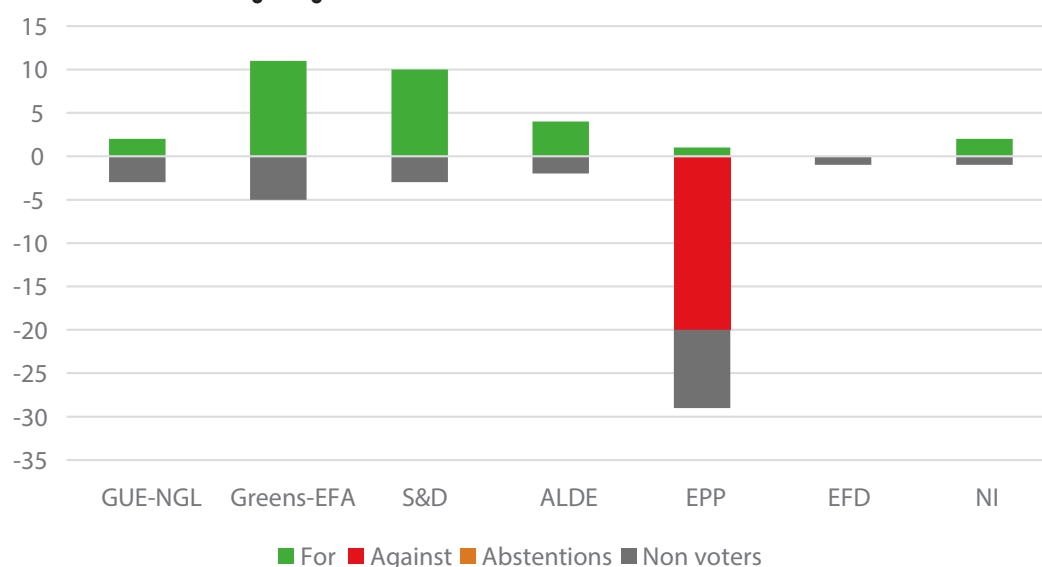
For example, the MEPs from EPP and S&D groups voted against each other on the first reform of the Stability and Growth Pact (as part of the Six-Pack), which

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ended up being adopted by a centre-right majority (See Graph 12c). However, as we have seen, they managed to align their votes to adopt a second reform of this Pact (in the Two-Pack vote), on the basis of a grand-coalition majority (see Graph 8c). The example of negotiations on the processing and transfer of Financial Messaging Data from the EU to the USA (or SWIFT Agreement) for the purposes of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) confirms that variable-geometry majorities can be formed on the same issue, depending on the exact nature of what is at stake.

The decision to launch negotiations with the USA on the SWIFT Agreement was thus taken in July 2010 on the basis of a grand-coalition majority including EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR groups who managed to agree on the balance between European citizens' right to privacy and the need to acquire efficient tools for combating terrorism (ALDE and S&D groups had voted against a first proposal of compromise in February 2010). However the desire to **suspend temporarily the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Program** when NSA's eavesdropping was discovered was expressed by a centre-left majority (see Graph 11).

GRAPH 11 ► Should the Commission temporarily suspend the EU-USA Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (SWIFT vote)? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In October 2013, after the leaks revealed that the US National Security Agency (NSA) was able to illegally access the SWIFT banking database, the EP asked the Commission **to temporarily suspend the EU-USA Terrorist Finance Tracking Program**. The MEPs stated that if the allegations were verified, it would be a violation of the agreement between the EU and the USA.

This non-binding resolution was proposed by S&D, ALDE and G/EFA, and also received support from MEPs from GUE/NGL, passing with 280 votes for and 254 against (*see Annex 5*). EPP and ECR groups opposed the resolution with the argument that there was a lack of concrete evidence of NSA's mass surveillance. They were joined by most of the Swedish MEPs from ALDE, and Romanian members of S&D and ALDE. Votes of MEPs elected in France were in line with those of their political group (*see Graph 11*).

It is therefore again by relying on the illustrative dimension of the six other votes chosen for this study that French and European citizens will be able to form the most informed opinion possible with regard to the impact the choices that they will express in May 2014 by voting for a particular candidate or party has on decision making³².

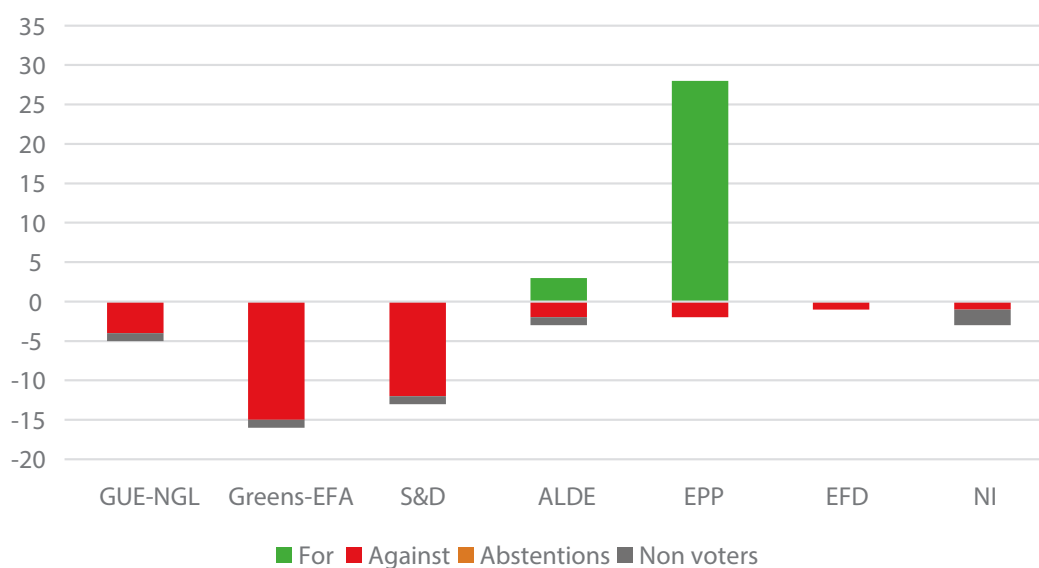
2.3.1. Votes won by a centre-right majority

Three symbolic examples can give an idea of the issues on which a centre-right majority (EPP, ALDE, ECR) was formed in the EP during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, with the active participation of the French MEPs concerned, in order to win about 15% of the roll-call votes. All three concern economic and trade issues, since they relate to extending the single market for services, the first reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, and the launch of negotiations aiming to adopt a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) (*see Graphs 12a to 12c*).

³². It happens that the six examples mentioned show that a centre-right coalition was strongest in votes on the economic and trade issues and that a centre-left coalition won the votes on social and environmental issues. Of course opposite examples can be observed, although less often, that is to say a centre-left majority winning votes on economic and trade issues and a centre-right majority winning votes on social and environmental issues.

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GRAPH 12a ▶ Should the EU strengthen and extend its internal market for services?
The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

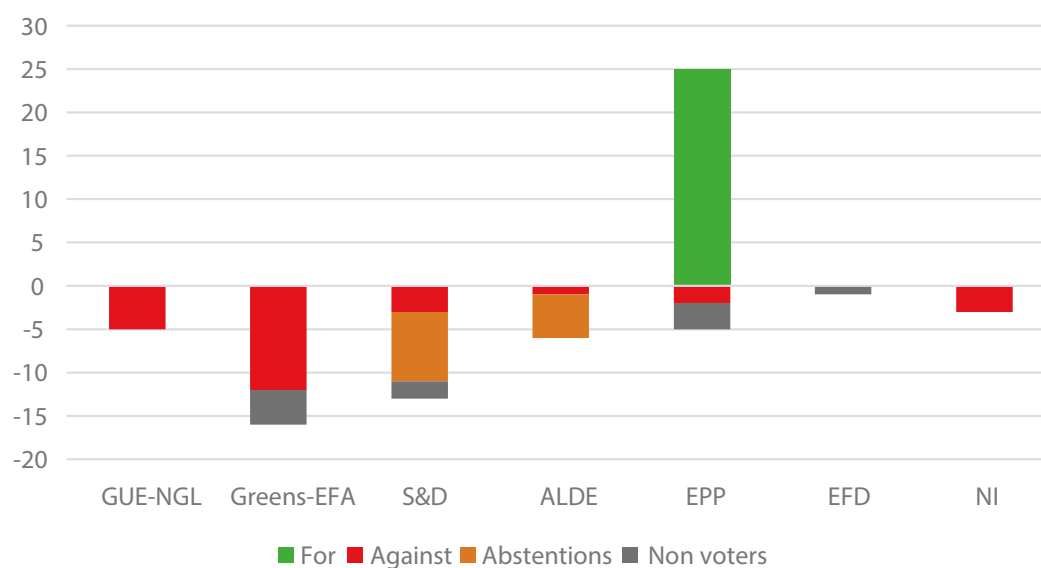
A non-binding report on the **internal market for services** was adopted in September 2013 by the EP. The text deplores the incorrect implementation of the Services Directive of 2006 in certain member states and asks them and the Commission to step up their efforts to foster the free movement of services in the EU. Among other things, the report asks the Commission to identify and eliminate unjustified barriers, such as discriminatory practices and redundant regulatory burdens that aim to protect national markets. In addition, the report asks that there be better communication between the Commission and member states, which should be supported in their efforts to fully implement the Services Directive.

This report was supported by French MEPs from EPP and ALDE groups, while MEPs from other political groups and the Front national abstained or voted against (see Graph 12a). This vote of French MEPs is in line with the votes cast throughout the EP (see Annex 5)³³.

33. MEPs from ECR, which did not include any French members, also voted in favour of the report on the internal market for services.

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GRAPH 12b ▶ Should the EU create a single market with the United States?
The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

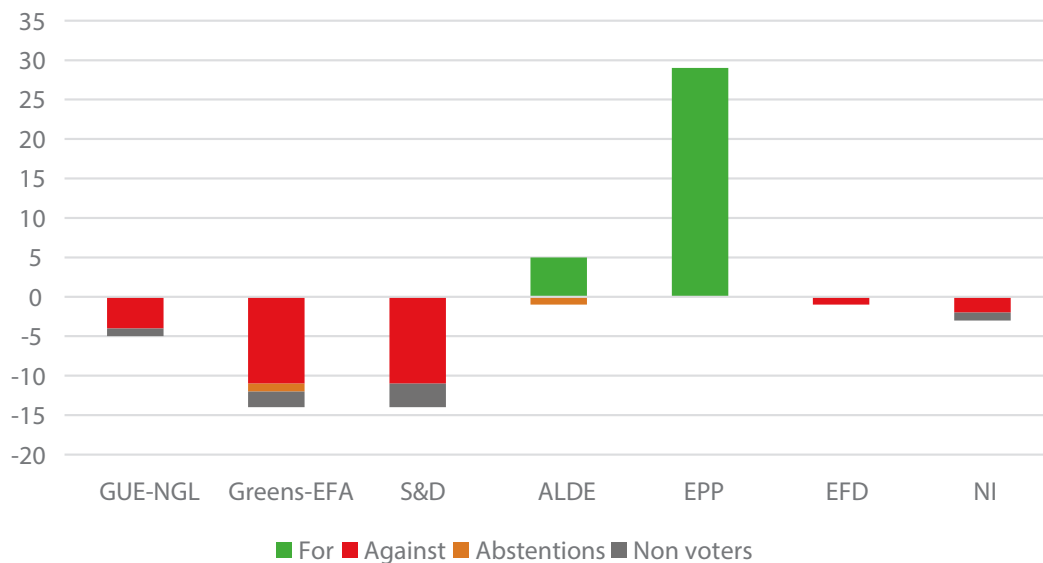
In May 2013, a large majority of European MEPs supported the position put forward by the EP on the **negotiations of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States**. The MEPs asked the Commission and the Council to exclude cultural and audiovisual services from the negotiations, particularly those provided online.

This launch of TTIP negotiations was approved by 22 UMP MEPs and three centrist MEPs. Eleven French MEPs from the Verts, MEPs from the Front de gauche and Front national, a centrist MEP and three socialist MEPs voted against. The MEPs from MoDem and eight socialist MEPs abstained, while some socialist, UMP and the MPF MEPs did not participate in the vote (see *Graph 12b*). In the EP as a whole, only MEPs from GUE/NGL and G/EFA groups and most of the non-attached MEPs voted against (see *Annex 5*)³⁴.

³⁴. To enter into force, the TTIP needs to be ratified by a majority of EP votes.

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GRAPH 12c ▶ Should the EU strengthen the supervision of budgetary and economic policies of euro area member states? The vote of MEPs elected in France



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In September 2011, the EP adopted, after several postponements, a legislative package, also called the **Six-Pack, reforming EMU governance**. The rules established concern the strengthened supervision and evaluation of stability and convergence rules for member states for the purpose of preventing excessive deficits. The Six-Pack also defends the idea of coordination of national economic policies.

These six legislative proposals were largely adopted due to the solid support of EPP and ALDE groups, whose members voted in favour of the six texts. Despite opposition of other groups, the EPP and ALDE groups obtained the majority thanks to a high level of internal discipline, combined with defection in other groups. However, MEPs from ECR and EFD were divided. S&D group only approved one of the six proposals, namely the one on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances. G/EFA supported three proposals, but voted against the other three. GUE/NGL voted against all six proposals (see Graph 12c).

French MEPs adopted positions that were globally in line with those noted in the EP as a whole (*see Annex 5*). A French centre-right majority emerged to support this first reform of the Stability and Growth Pact: French MEPs from UMP and ALDE groups approved the six proposals provided for in this reform, while the other French MEPs opposed it – only the vote on the procedure to control macroeconomic imbalances rallied a very large majority of French MEPs, with the exception of those of the Front de gauche, Front national and the MPF.

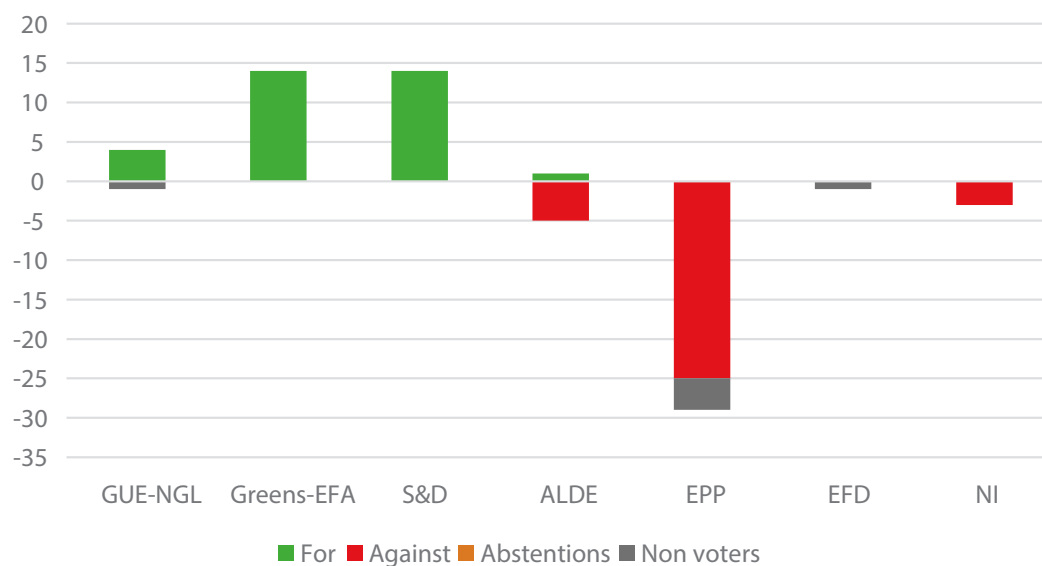
The vote that deals in particular with the technical and political conditions under which the European Commission could propose to sanction Member states with an excessive deficit, received *de facto* support from all the French MEPs in the EPP and ALDE groups (with the exception of one abstention) and was rejected by all the other French MEPs, with the exception of one abstention from a member of the Greens.

2.3.2. Votes won by a centre-left majority

Three symbolic examples can give an idea of the issues on which a centre-left majority (S&D, ALDE, Greens and radical left) was formed in the EP during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, with the active participation of the French MEPs concerned, in order to win about 15% of roll-call votes. All three involve social and environmental issues, since they concern the extension of maternity leave, rules for fuel quality and the taxation of activities that pollute (*see Graphs 13a to 13c*).

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GRAPH 13a ▶ Should the minimum period of fully paid maternity leave move from 14 to 20 weeks across the EU? The vote of MEPs elected in France



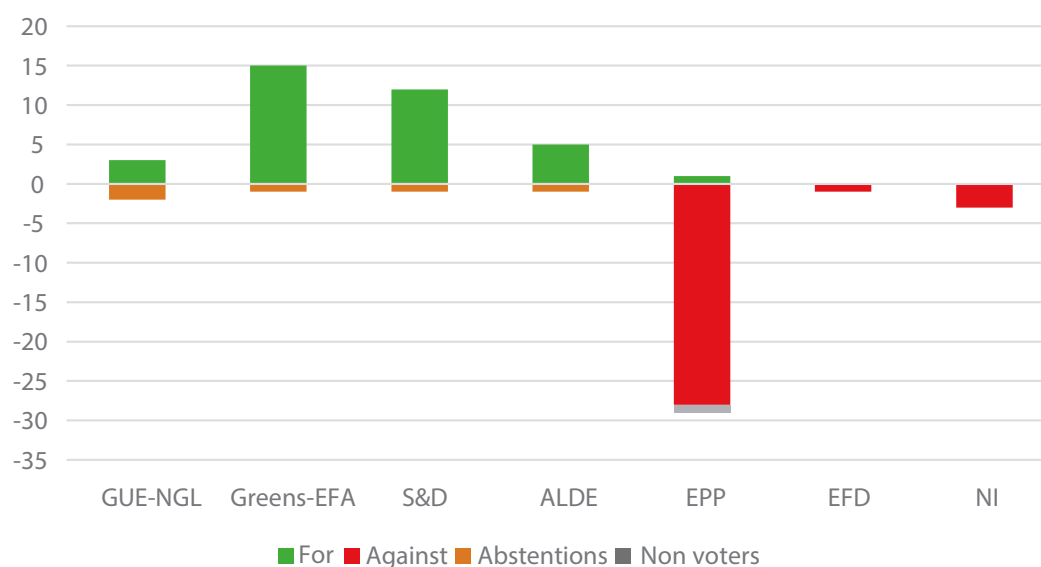
Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In October 2010, the EP adopted a position on the **Maternity Leave Directive**. The text provided for an extension of maternity leave from 14 to 20 fully paid weeks and a number of other measures favourable to mothers and pregnant women, as well as for strengthening the role of the paternity leave.

The key vote chosen by VoteWatch Europe is on Amendment 12=38, relating to the extension of maternity leave on full pay from 14 to 20 weeks. This amendment was supported by French MEPs from S&D, Greens and United Left groups, and one centrist MEP, while French MEPs from other political groups and the Front national voted against, and a number of MEPs did not participate in the vote (see Graph 13a). This vote of French MEPs is in line with the votes cast in the EP as a whole (327 votes to 320), where the centre-left political groups – Socialists and Democrats (S&D), G/EFA and radical left (GUE/NGL) – reached the majority with the help of 82 MEPs from EPP groups, mainly from Poland, Italy, Hungary and Lithuania (see Annex 5).

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GRAPH 13B ▶ Should there be a cap on the use of biofuels? The vote of MEPs elected in France

Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

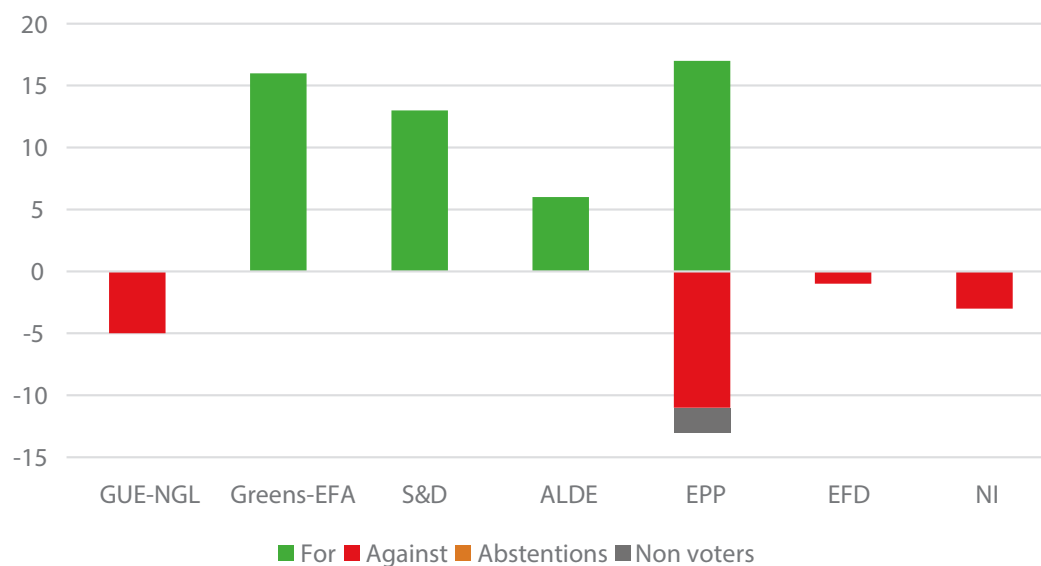
NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In September 2013, the EP adopted a legislative resolution relating to a **proposal on a fuel quality directive and renewable energy directive**. Before drafting this proposal, the Commission set an objective of reaching 10% of renewable energies in transport, nearly all of which come from first-generation crop-based biofuels. However objections claimed that this change would produce more pollution on account of deforestation and indirect change to land use and that it was partially responsible for the increase in food prices. This issue therefore was referred back to the Council and the EP, who voted in favour of a ceiling on crop-based biofuels in order to meet the EU energy objectives. The final version of the legislative report indicates that biofuels produced with food crops should not exceed 6% of the 10% renewable-energy target for transport in 2020.

This proposal was supported by French MEPs from S&D, Greens and United Left groups, while French centre-right, right and Front national MEPs voted against (*see Graph 13b*). This vote of French MEPs is in line with the EP as a whole since the proposal was approved by S&D, ALDE, G/EFA, GUE/NGL groups, while EPP and ECR opposed it.

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GRAPH 13c ▶ Should the EU increase the cost of economic activities that pollute?
 The vote of MEPs elected in France?



Source: VoteWatch Europe; Graph: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Lucie Marnas, Claire Versini

NB: To find out more about the affiliation of French parties with EP groups, see Table 6.

In July 2013, the MEPs adopted a milder version of a proposal of the Commission **on the timing of auctions of greenhouse gas allowances**. This proposal (on the backloading of auctions) was previously rejected at a plenary session in April 2013 by centre-right groups. Its new version is more restrictive when it comes to allowing the Commission to postpone the auctioning of carbon allowances. It clarifies that the Commission is able in exceptional circumstances to adapt the auction timetable and shall make no more than one such adaptation for a maximum number of 900 million allowances. It aims to stimulate the emissions trading scheme by preventing the auctioning and selling of allowances.

The European centre-left majority that emerged to support this new proposal comprises French MEPs from S&D and Europe Écologie, but also centrist MEPs (from ALDE and UMP groups). UMP MEPs were divided with 11 votes for and 11 votes against and two did not participate in the vote. MEPs from Front de gauche, Front national and the MPF voted against (*see Graph 13c*). This proposal was approved by a total of 344 votes for (mainly MEPs from S&D, ALDE, G/EFA and a minority of EPP members), 311 against (mainly EPP and members of ECR and EFD) and 46 abstentions (*see Annex 5*).

3. What will the political balance of power be between the new MEPs?

Whatever the majority at work during a particular vote, the new partisan balance of powers established by the May 2014 elections will determine the political conditions in which compromises will be forged enabling the EP to take its decisions. The issue is therefore to understand who is likely to make up the political majority that will be in a position to adopt the major strategic decisions of the European Union during the next parliamentary term and that will affect not only the pace and nature of European integration but also its member states and its citizens. It is also with consideration of this background information that French and European voters are called on to make their choice in the next elections.

3.1. Balance of power to consider in the light of three key factors: space, time and abstention

To analyse the consequences that the May 2014 European elections will have on the balance of power within the EP, it is necessary to consider three essential factors to understand the scope of the rebalancing that could occur between political groups after the vote: space, time and abstention.

3.1.1. Space and time, determining factors of the breadth of change

It is first important to underpin that the vote of Europeans will have a more significant impact in countries with a large number of EP seats (*see Annex 1, Table 1, population and number of MEPs per member state*).

Therefore we should take a closer look at election results in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania and the Netherlands because these eight countries account for more than three quarters of voters and about two thirds of EP seats³⁵. Their situation will therefore give an over-

³⁵. The eight countries with the highest populations in the EU (our sample of eight key countries) represent 77.5% of EU's population and 63.8% of EP seats.

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all idea of the conclusions and consequences of May 2014 elections, although observers and those involved in this election should of course consider all the member states to gain insight into how the EU is perceived and the evolution of European integration as a whole.

The likely number of electors and seats that political groups could obtain in May 2014 compared to their 2009 results is the second factor to take into consideration to better understand the impact of the upcoming vote.

Certain political groups could achieve high, even extremely high scores in May 2014 - scores that a number of observers and media are already commenting about - with little or no effect on the number of seats they hold because they have already obtained reasonably comparable results in 2009 (CDU/CSU in Germany, UKIP in the United Kingdom, etc.). In the same way, low scores of certain other formations no longer appear to have a genuine institutional impact on account of their poor results in the 2009 elections (as was the case for the French PS).

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TABLE 8 ▶ Noteworthy scores in the eight key countries with a varied impact on the number of seats obtained

	SCORE IN 2009	POSSIBLE SCORE IN 2014	SEATS IN 2009	POSSIBLE SEATS IN 2014
Scores with a limited impact on the number of seats				
CDU-CSU (Germany, EPP)	37.9%	39.3%	42	39
PVV (NL, non-attached)	17%	15.3%	4	5
UKIP (UK, EFD)	16.1%	27.25%	13	18
PS (France, S&D)	16.5%	19%	14	17
PNL (Romania, ALDE)	14.5%	15.9%	5	6
Scores with a substantial impact on the number of seats				
PO-PSL (Poland, EPP)	51%	40.6%	28	23
Front national (France, non-attached)	6.3%	22.67%	3	19
Labour (UK, S&D)	15.3%	31.25%	13	28
Izquierda Unida (Spain, GUE-NGL)	2.9%	13.1%	1	7
Movimento 5 Stelle (Italy, not yet affiliated)	-	21.6%	-	18

Sources: 2009 data: European Parliament; 2014 estimates: Pollwatch data (consulted on 17 April 2014)

Table and calculations: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Valentin Kreilinger and Claire Tagliione-Darmé

On the other hand, it is clear that some important developments in terms of votes obtained will strongly influence the number of seats held. For example, the increase in the number of the Front national seats could be significant (x6), along with that of the Spanish radical left party, Izquierda Unida (from 1 to 7), without mentioning the Italian Movimento 5 Stelle, which could win some 18 seats. Another notable example is the British Labour Party, which could see its MEPs double, while the Polish coalition bringing together the Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party (PSL) could lose a good share of its seats.

3.1.2. Does abstention benefit protest parties?

The intermediary nature of European elections is traditionally seen as advantageous to the protest votes aimed at punishing the incumbent government, if

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not traditional parties in general. With this in mind, this year this protest could also be directed against European integration itself, especially in the context of a crisis marked by a growing mistrust with regard to the European Union.

European elections would therefore mechanically benefit protest parties, whose members are more active, and that now have more MEPs than what their actual political weight would allow them to envisage. At the same time, voters who have had a negative opinion of European Union action in recent years but are eager to preserve the basic values of European integration (spirit of reconciliation, free movement, euro, etc.) could be tempted to take more action to combat the rise in protest voting.

This protest voting may also benefit mainstream parties, but only when they are in the opposition, and may therefore boost their weight in influential EP groups. But when protest voting benefits smaller parties or extremist formations, votes are spread out and MEPs of these parties will belong to groups whose political weight is very limited. It may therefore be tempting to “vote strategically” for mainstream parties, also to send a message of no-confidence or change vis-à-vis the EU.

Studies on the effects of low turnout on the results of parties in the elections do not all coincide. For some, abstention results in an unbalanced representation of voters and therefore less representative results³⁶, while for others the consequences of abstention are minimal³⁷.

However, these studies are based above all on data about first-order elections, a notion which refers to elections considered to deal with important, high-priority issues by the voters. In this sense the studies cannot necessarily be applied to European elections in their current form, as they have been defined as second-order elections³⁸, seen as of lesser importance by the voters and which, according to the academic literature, obey a different logic, often being

36. Arend Lijphart, “Unequal participation: Democracy’s Unresolved Dilemma”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 1, March 1997., pp. 1-14.

37. Patrick Bernhagen and Michael Marsh, “The partisan effect of low turnout: Analyzing vote abstention as a missing data problem”, *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Sept. 2007, pp. 548-560; Cees van der Eijk and Marcel van Egmond, “Political effects of low turnout in national and European elections”, *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Sept. 2007, pp. 561-573.

38. Karlheinz Reif et Harmenn Schmitt, “Nine second-order national elections: A conceptual framework for the analysis of European election results”, *European Journal of Political Research*, 8, 1980, pp 3-44.

the occasion of low turnout. It is especially the case when a large portion of abstention during European elections seems to be due to the subsidiary nature of these “federal” elections, on account of the EU’s limited competencies.

This model, although discussed a great deal since, has generally remained valid and can partially draw on the high rates of abstention to explain the better results for protest parties in European elections – particularly in countries where they were held at mid-term – than national elections. We can therefore conclude that abstention benefits protest parties during European elections³⁹.

3.2. Scores and seats: what is the outlook for June 2014?

At the end of this analysis, what results could be envisaged for the upcoming European elections? What can we learn from an overall analysis of polls available from the beginning of the electoral campaign, and that should be treated with caution just weeks ahead of the elections?

3.2.1. Major trends

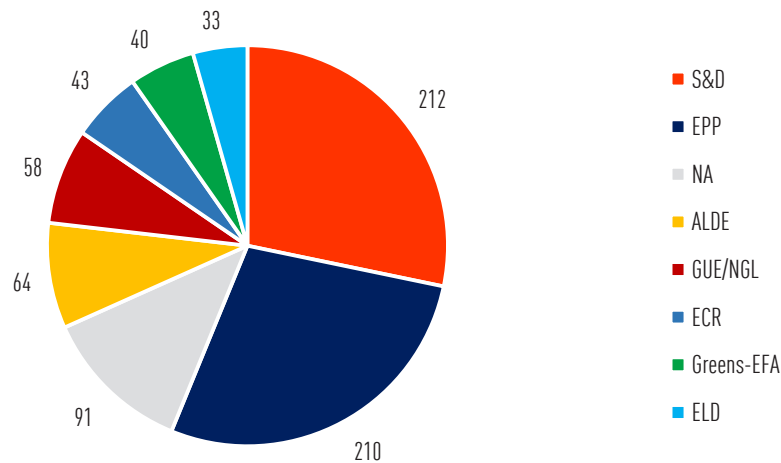
If we trust average results observed by the polls for the past several months in the EU countries (*see Graphs 14a and 14b*), several major trends have emerged, combining certain and uncertain elements.

The resulting projections in terms of seats are based on the presumption that the current political groups will continue to welcome the same parties, which remains to be seen, particularly concerning the EPP.

39. Daniel Kselman and Emerson Niuou “Protest Voting in Plurality Elections: A Theory of Voter Signaling”, *Public Choice*, Vol.148, No. 3, 2011, pp. 395-418.

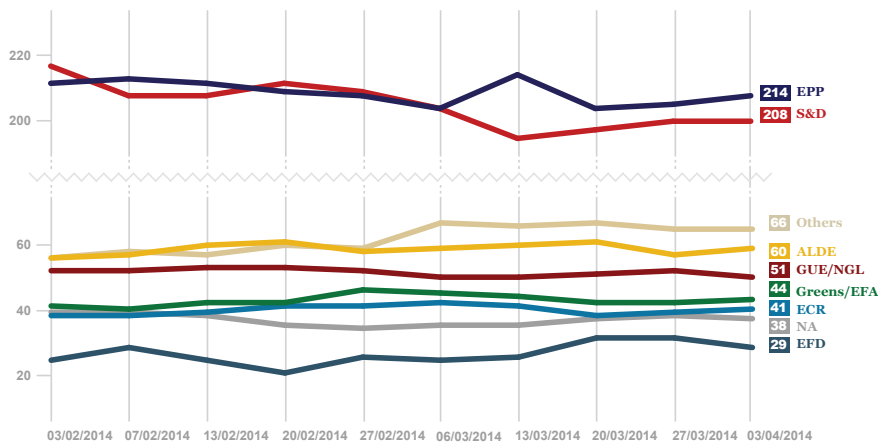
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GRAPH 14a ▶ Estimation of the weight of political groups in the next EP
Averages February-April 2014



Source: PollWatch. Calculations: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

GRAPH 14b ▶ Evolution of the weight of political groups in the upcoming European Parliament
Polls February-April 2014



Source: European Parliament / TNS Opinion (www.elections2014.eu/)

A close race between the Socialists & Democrats and the EPP Conservatives

S&D and EPP Christian-Democrats should clearly remain the two leading EP political groups, consistent with votes of a strong majority of European citizens. With some 200 seats apiece, they would represent more than 50% of EP

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seats, far ahead of the third political group, which is expected to rally considerably fewer seats (in any case fewer than 100).

We can see a decline in EPP (some 60 seats fewer), which is related to the estimation of its score in Italy and Poland, which should not be offset elsewhere. On the contrary, following the poor results in 2009, S&D can hope to rebound to a certain extent in the eight key countries, and particularly the United Kingdom (but probably not in France), which could translate into a gain of at least 20 seats.

Against this backdrop, the race between EPP and S&D could be very close: they are expected to each obtain around 28% of seats. Poll averages over the past three months, according to the sources referred to (*see Graphs 14a and 14b*), indicates that one or the other of these groups is slightly ahead⁴⁰.

Who will be the third force in the European Parliament?

ALDE, Greens/EFA and ECR could suffer a decrease in the number of their seats, with respectively 8.5% (-2.5 points), 5.3% (-3 points) and 6% (-2 points) of MEPs, which translates into 64, 40 and 40 of the 751 seats according to the average of estimations of the PollWatch website.

Liberals could suffer from their poor results in Germany. Greens/EFA could experience a similar situation in France, where they will undoubtedly not repeat their score of 16% from the last vote. Moreover, they are only represented in half of EU countries.

The European Conservative and Reformist group (ECR) was recently formed, does not exist in all member states and could be weakened in these elections. It is largely led by British Conservatives, who accounted for 50% of the group in the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, and who received negative feedback in polls on account of their presence in government. This downward trend that we can also see in other members of the group such as the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the Czech Republic is not offset by the possible increase in

⁴⁰. It should be noted that the baseline surveys available in mid-April (PollWatch and European Parliament-TNS Sofres) placed the EPP group slightly ahead.

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Polish MEPs in the Law and Justice Party (PiS) currently part of the opposition, which could rise slightly and become the leading delegation in the group.

The two “natural” coalition partners of the two leading political groups in the EP, ALDE and the Greens, could lose seats in the 2014 elections. The question has been raised as to what group could possibly become a third power in the next parliamentary term.

With regard to this issue, the current questions about the rise in populists and the structuring or not of far-right MEPs in the EP is a very particular issue.

Since the last elections, the different parties labelled “populists”⁴¹ include some 140 MEPs. 33 of them belong to EFD, 29 others are non-attached, accounting for 62 MEPs of the “independent right” or far-right. The other “populist” MEPs include 35 radical left MEPs from GUE/NGL and 56 Eurosceptics from ECR. Populist formations now hold nearly 20% of EP seats. Some of them could join current political groups or even try to form a new group. Political groups could also be redefined, particularly given the scores announced of extremist parties, to which many MEPS currently belong as non-attached MEPs.

Populist political groups are expected to maintain their positions or attain slightly better scores: 7.5% (+3) for GUE/NGL (59 seats) and 4% (+/-0) for EFD (33 seats) according to PollWatch estimations. It could even be possible that with nearly 60 seats, the radical left could obtain scores making it the third power in parliamentary groups after the elections.

National parties that do not belong to a political group (non-attached) or are not yet represented in the EP (and particularly the Italian Movimento 5 Stelle and the German Alternativ für Deutschland party could gain 91 seats (12% of MEPs) according to PollWatch.

Looking strictly at the numbers, it is therefore likely that the influence of the populist and extremist MEPs will grow stronger after the May 2014 elections, which would be logical considering the current mistrust, founded or not, with

41. See Yves Bertoncini: “European Elections: less abstention, more populism?”, *Tribune*, Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, November 2013.

regard to the EU, but without constituting a coherent or homogeneous whole on a political, ideological, or partisan level.

That being said, are the different far-right MEPs, strictly speaking, likely to create a new political group⁴²? To establish an EP group, at least 25 MEPs from seven member states are needed. Negotiations are being held with this purpose in mind with the Front national (France), Partij voor de Vrijheid (PvV) (Netherlands), Freiheitliche Partei, (FPÖ) (Austria), Vlaams Belang (Belgium) and Liga Nord (Italy), which would then have to leave EFD if this were to happen, Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden) and Slovenská národná strana (SNS) (Slovakia). If all these parties manage to win seats in the EP – which is not certain, especially in Slovakia’s case –, according to the latest months polls available it could then meet the requirements to do so. But according to the polls, such a group, even if it is established, would not surpass the ALDE, Greens or even GUE in terms of numbers in the next EP.

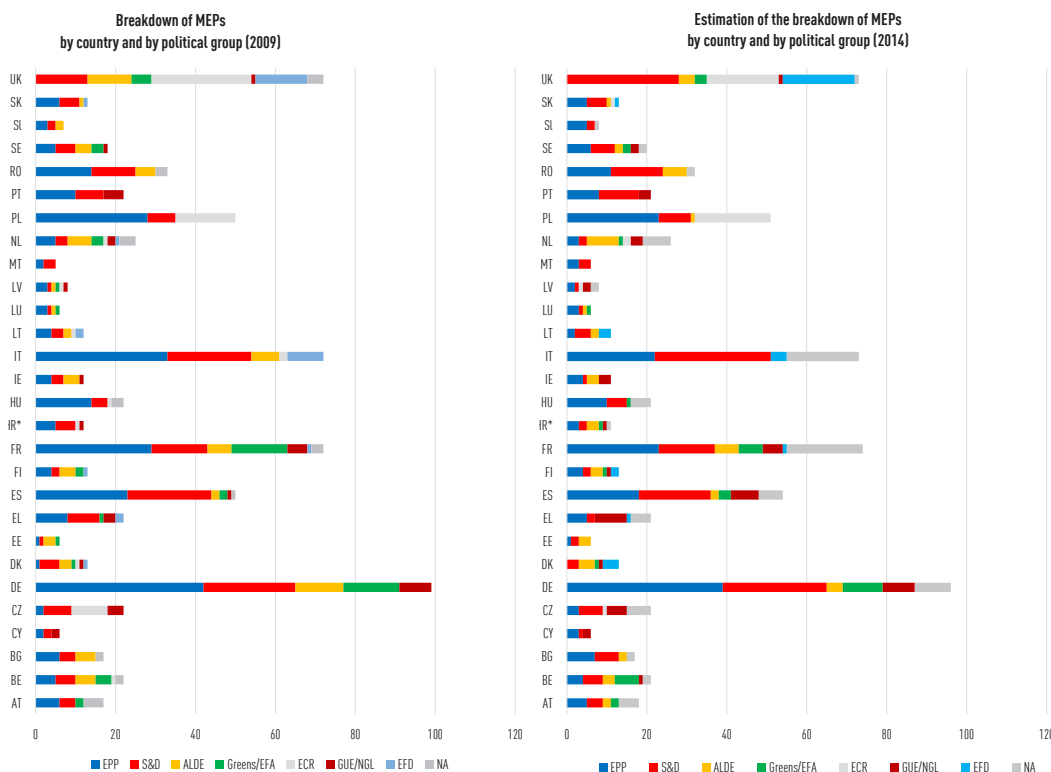
3.2.2. What changes in the balance of power could occur between national delegations within EP political groups?

Breaking down the analysis by member state, we can see that changes in terms of votes will impact the weight of national delegations within political groups in the EP, either decreasing or strengthening them. Although in certain countries like Germany, the distribution of MEPs is expected to remain relatively stable (with the exception of liberals) in other countries like Italy, important changes are expected to occur, particularly among the non-attached and liberals (*see Graph 15*). It is important to analyse the potential breadth of these changes, at a time when often the most numerous national delegations in political groups are the ones exerting the most influence, and who therefore have the most influence more generally on the content of decisions made by the EP.

⁴². A far-right group “European Right Group” existed from 1985 to 1989 before being symbolically called “Technical Group of European Rights” from 1989 to 1994 but was subject to internal differences and abandonments, especially on the part of German MEPs. A new attempt was made in 2007 under the name of “Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty” but the experiment failed after several months solely due to internal differences, especially between Italian and Romanian MEPs.

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GRAPH 15 ▶ Estimation of the breakdown of MEPs by member state and by political group



UK: United Kingdom; SK: Slovakia; SL: Slovenia; SE: Sweden; RO: Romania; PT: Portugal; PL: Poland; NL: Netherlands; MT: Malta; LV: Latvia; LU: Luxembourg; LT: Lithuania; IT: Italy; IE: Ireland; HU: Hungary; HR: Croatia; FR: France; FI: Finland; ES: Spain; EL: Greece; EE: Estonia; DK: Denmark; DE: Germany; CZ: Czech Republic; CY: Cyprus; BG: Bulgaria; BE: Belgium; AT: Austria.

HR*: Figures for 2013 instead of 2009

Sources: 2009 data: European Parliament; Estimations 2014: Pollwatch data (consulted on 17.04.2014).

Graphs: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

Generally speaking, we can expect changes in terms of the weight of national delegations in all or nearly all groups. In EPP, UMP (France) could just remain among the three leading national delegations in terms of MEPs. In S&D, Spain (PSOE) could move from third to fourth position because of British MEPs from the Labour Party. It is relevant from a political standpoint that Labour MEPs may become the second-leading national delegation in S&D. In these two groups, Germany's position (CDU/CSU for EPP, SPD for S&D and Italy's (Forza Italia for EPP and PD for S&D) could continue to be mainstays.

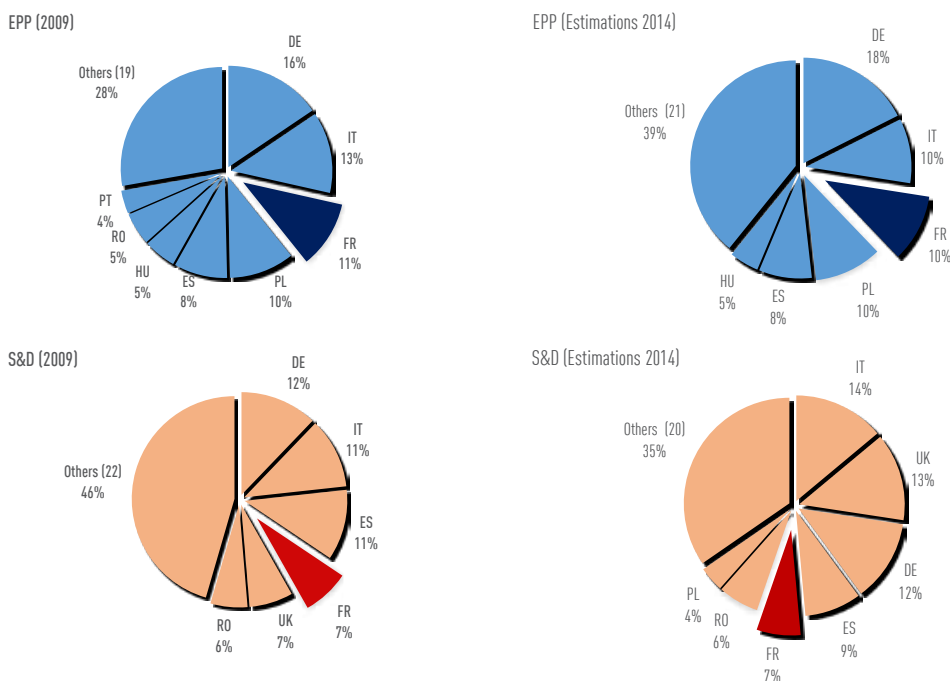
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GRAPH 16 ► **Weight of French delegations in political groups after May 2014.**
Average of polls February-April 2014

UK: United Kingdom; **SK:** Slovakia; **SL:** Slovenia; **SE:** Sweden; **RO:** Romania; **PT:** Portugal; **PL:** Poland; **NL:** Netherlands; **MT:** Malta; **LV:** Latvia; **LU:** Luxembourg; **LT:** Lithuania; **IT:** Italy; **IE:** Ireland; **HU:** Hungary; **HR:** Croatia; **FR:** France; **FI:** Finland; **ES:** Spain; **EL:** Greece; **EE:** Estonia; **DK:** Denmark; **DE:** Germany; **CZ:** Czech Republic; **CY:** Cyprus; **BG:** Bulgaria; **BE:** Belgium; **AT:** Austria.

Sources: 2009 data: European Parliament; Estimations 2014: Pollwatch data (consulted on 17.04.2014).

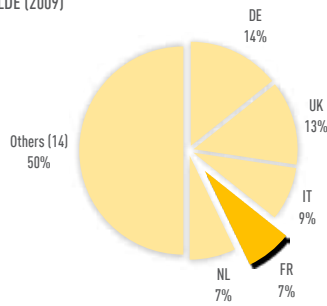
Graphs: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé



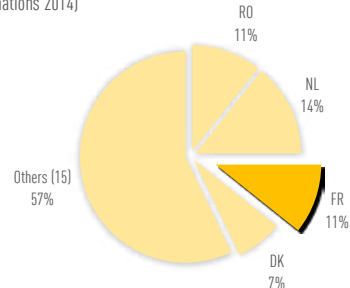
ALDE should be the party that will undergo the biggest changes in terms of internal balance: none of the three delegations with the most power in the 2009-2014 parliamentary term should remain in its position as one of the three leading delegations. Instead of Germany (Frei Demokratische Partei, FDP), United Kingdom (Lib-Dem) and Italy (Italia dei Valori), we could see Romania (Partidul Național Liberal, PNL), the Netherlands (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD and Democraten 1966, D'66) and France (L'Alternative). The Greens group could see France (Europe Écologie/Les Verts - EELV) lose ground, Belgium (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie-NVA) gain ground, and Germany (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) move into the leading position.

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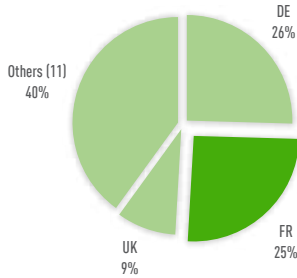
ALDE (2009)



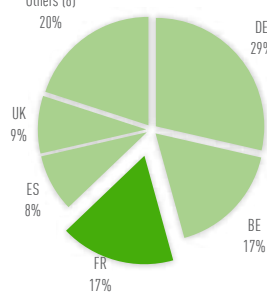
ALDE (Estimations 2014)



Greens/EFA (2009)

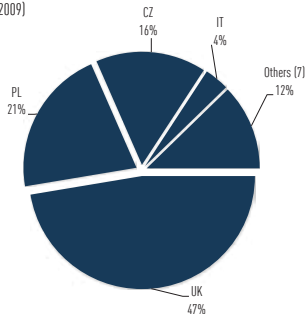


Greens/EFA (Estimations 2014)

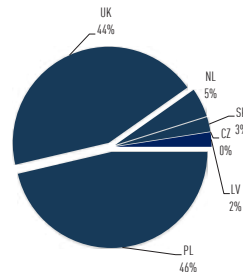


As mentioned earlier, ECR is expected to mainly be composed of British Conservative MEPs and Polish PiS MEPs and be based on a delicate balance related to individual membership of members whose parties are affiliated elsewhere.

ECR (2009)



ECR (Estimations 2014)*

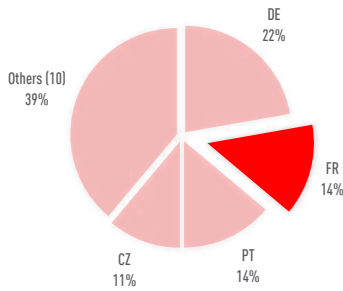


* without individual rallies

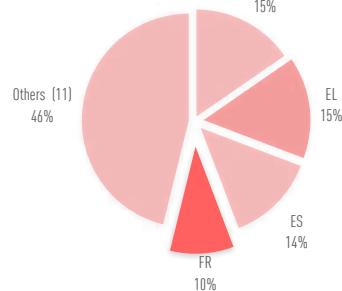
In the GUE radical left group, Portugal (Coligação Democrática Unitária, CDU/ Bloco de Esquerda) should lose its position among the top three delegations to German (Die Linke) and French (Front de Gauche/NPA) MEPs, each standing for 15% of the group's seats. These delegations could be closely followed by the Greek from Syriza and the Spanish delegates from Izquierda Unida, which could each gather 13% of the group's seats.

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GUE/NGL (2009)

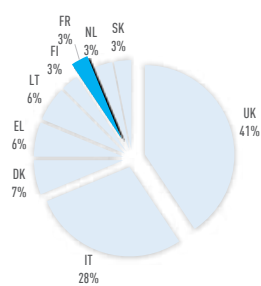


GUE/NGL (Estimations 2014)

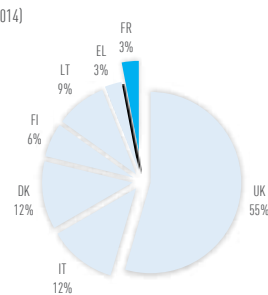


EFD is expected to once again mainly be composed of UKIP MEPs, who could represent more than half of the seats, followed by Italy's Lega Nord (if it still belongs to EFD) and the Danish Folkeparti.

EFD (2009)

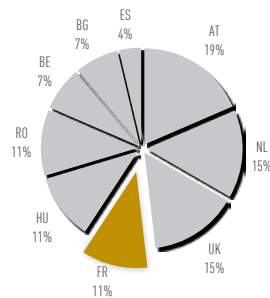


EFD (Estimations 2014)

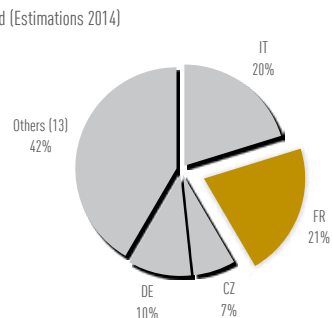


The weight of national delegations within non-attached MEPs is not significant - since they do not belong to one group, and it does not follow any particular voting discipline or strategy to exert influence. We can however note that Italy's Movimento 5 Stelle could win a large number of seats, as could Germany's Alternative für Deutschland. Other parties, such as the United Kingdom's British National Party or the Netherlands' Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), should for their part only gain a small portion of seats.

Non-attached (2009)



Non-attached (Estimations 2014)



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According to current estimations, French MEPs could see their weight as a national delegation decrease in most influential groups (*see Graphs 16*). In the two most important groups—numerically speaking, the French delegation should just remain in the three leading delegations of the EPP, and move from fourth to fifth or even sixth position in S&D (almost placed equal with Romania). It is in the Greens group, where the French delegation was the leading delegation with a quarter of the MEPs from 2009 to 2014, that the change should be the most drastic since French MEPs are expected to only hold 17% of seats.

It is also often because of movements in other member states that the weight of French delegations could change. This is particularly true in the case of ALDE, where German and British delegations suffer from very negative national political contexts and could as a result leave more weight to their European partners in the group, with French centrist MEPs likely to become one of the leading delegations, side by side with the Romanian PNL and the Dutch VVD/D66.

Lastly, a considerable increase is expected in the number of French MEPs among the non-attached MEPs, which do not constitute a parliamentary group and do not have a voting line or common strategy to exert influence in the EP. This further explains the open determination of the French Front national to establish a new far-right group, which it would lead if should be the case, with the participation of MEPs from the Netherlands, Austria, Italy and Belgium, and MEPs from at least two other EU countries, possibly Nordic ones (25 MEPs from 7 countries are needed to form a political group).

3.2.3. What are the different coalition scenarios for the choice of President of the Commission and 2014-2019 Parliament votes?

It seems informative to conclude with the different types of partisan coalition that could emerge from the elections on 22-25 May 2014, on the basis of seat forecasts drawn from an average of polls in recent months (*see Table 9*). This forward-looking assessment should focus on the two votes relative to the nomination of the President of the Commission and his or her team, but above all on the thousands of other issues that the MEPs will have to cast their vote on between 2014 and 2020.

The choice of the President of the Commission and the College of Commissioners

These seat forecasts indicate that two winning coalitions are likely to emerge for the choice of President of the Commission and the College of Commissioners:

- A “very large grand-coalition with ALDE” based on the participation of MEPs from S&D, EPP and ALDE: it could decide to support a candidate put forward by the political group with the most seats, even a candidate put forward by ALDE, given its central position in this coalition. In both cases, the candidates could be those chosen as candidates to be President of the Commission during the electoral campaign or candidates chosen to facilitate the reaching of a compromise between political groups on one hand and the EP and European Council on the other;
- A “Grand-coalition” based on the participation of MEPs from S&D and EPP: it also could decide to support the candidate proposed by the dominant political group, whether it is the one that put forward a candidate to be President of the Commission during the campaign or another candidate.

The results and the number of seats that we are currently envisaging make it highly unlikely that a winning coalition will emerge that only includes centre-left and centre-right MEPs. The formation of a majority centre-left coalition could be possible but would require that MEPs from the radical left, Greens, S&D and ALDE join forces together with the radical left (GUE/NGL), what is unlikely. It seems moreover impossible based on the current projections. The formation of a centre-right coalition is also more unlikely because it would have to rally MEPs from ALDE, EPP, ECR and beyond (because the first three groups would not have the majority of seats on their own).

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TABLE 9 ▶ Possible winning coalitions between 2014 and 2019
 Averages of PollWatch polls February-April 2014

	GRAND-COALITION EPP-S&D-ALDE	GRAND-COALITION EPP-S&D	CENTRE-LEFT COALITION	CENTRE-RIGHT COALITION
S&D	212	212	212	
EPP	210	210		210
ALDE	64		64	64
Greens/EFA			40	
GUE-NGL			58	
ECR				43
Total	486 (65%)	422 (56%)	374 (49%)	317 (42%)

Source: Pollwatch

Calculations: Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin, Valentin Kreilinger and Claire Taglione-Darmé

What trends for the 2014-2019 Parliament votes

Seat forecasts must be interpreted with caution when it comes to forecasting the variable-geometry majorities that could occur during the next parliamentary term on the basis of issues on which MEPs are called to vote. It is highly likely that these majorities continue to vary including for votes on the same issues, as was the case in the parliamentary term coming to an end (as can be seen in the example of the Stability Pact reform).

If we combine these seat forecasts with the information provided in the second section of this study and a review of the main issues on which the 2014-2019 EP will be called to make decisions (*see Table 6*), we can however determine a few major trends.

As regards all the issues related to the EU's contribution to resolving the crisis, grand-coalition majorities could be formed with regard to everything that involves the use of European financing (implementation of policies related to the MFF and mid-term review) and regulation of the financial sector

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(particularly the banking union), for which consensus majorities cannot be ruled out. Left vs. right confrontation majorities could however be formed with regard to decisions on internal (single market) or external (TTIP) liberalisation unless a new balance of power established in May 2014 makes more balanced compromises possible.

With regard to the evolution of basic values of European integration, grand-coalition majorities will undoubtedly be dominant and likely to block the strengthening of the representation of Eurosceptic or Europhobic MEPs. A better balance of power between the EPP and S&D that is likely to be produced by the elections will undoubtedly lead to more compromises on issues related to the EMU and regulation of the single market. The nature of the positions taken by the EP and the majorities on free-movement issues could vary according to the extent to which the positions of Europhobic MEPs on this issue are taken into consideration.

Defining the elements of a European strategy in globalisation could give rise to extremely variable majorities. Grand-coalition majorities on EU relations with its neighbours (particularly with Russia and Arab countries); left vs. right confrontation majorities on migration issues and on energy- and climate-related issues; and consensus majorities on humanitarian aid and human rights.

In any case, it is the nature of the existing powers and majority formations that it is numerically possible to establish that will determine the exact nature of European Parliament decisions over the next five years - and hence the voters who are to choose their representatives in political negotiations and debates that the EP will hold after the month of May 2014.

CONCLUSION

DIVIDES AND FACES AT WORK DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

The intention of analysing some symbolic votes during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term in this study is to provide particularly enlightening elements of information for the citizens called on to vote in May 2014. The divisions expressed over the past five years, around well-identified partisan groups, are in fact likely to once again structure European Parliamentary life until 2019, based on the balance of power that is expected to change between groups on the evening of 25 May, in compliance with the choices expressed by the Europeans who will have voted. In this context, it is of course particularly useful to complete and delve further into the aforementioned information by consulting the hundreds of other voting analyses carried out by VoteWatch Europe (www.votewatch.eu).

It is also just as essential to round out such “retrospective” analysis with a more forward-looking assessment of what the parties and candidates propose, in order to address economic, social, political and diplomatic challenges that the EU is likely to encounter in the short and medium term. Such an assessment should focus on the “manifestos” and other “platforms” adopted by the European political parties involved in this electoral campaign (*see Annex 6*), as well as on those who decided to put forward the parties and candidates in the running in each of the 28 EU member states.

It is to be welcomed that most major European parties have chosen European leaders to embody such political divisions, by appointing them as candidates for President of the Commission. This innovation, which is both institutional and political, will bring the EU even more into the common right to democratic debate, by allowing direct confrontation between the candidates that the media and observers can analyse and comment, and which will provide valuable indications to voters – as is the case at national level. This political

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practice, now set to become almost systematic in preparation for the European elections, is real democratic progress for the EU.

As previously highlighted, it is not certain at this stage that the next President of the Commission, whom the European Council must nominate, subject to approval by the EP, will ultimately be chosen from among the candidates submitted to the vote of the people. But as the Lisbon Treaty states that the European elections should be taken into account, this choice should well be in compliance with the partisan balance of power established after the European vote. In any event, it is important not to minimise the political significance of this choice of leaders entrusted to personify the divides structuring European political life, during the campaign but also throughout the debates that will stir the EP elected in May 2014. Just as it is important to highlight the fact that the new MEPs will have to express themselves by casting several thousand votes on such important issues as the functioning of the Economic and Monetary Union, agricultural policy and rural development, international trade liberalisation and the adoption of standards to protect consumers and their health.

The 751 MEPs that the Europeans will elect between 22 and 25 May next (74 in France) will be the faces of the EU within the EP until spring 2019. Given the operating mode of this institution that is both partisan and transparent, they will provide the vigour and personalisation that are often lacking in democratic debate on the EU. This will take the form of direct political confrontation, led on the basis of assumed divisions and will lead to a majority of votes cast by a majority of voters.

It is highly likely that the coexistence of variable-geometry majorities will once again be at work within the EP from 2014 to 2019, on the basis of tripartite “consensus majorities”, “grand-coalition majorities” and “left vs. right confrontation majorities” described by this study. However, the existence of these three types of majority should not conceal the fact that it is a “logic of competition” between partisan groups that underlies the functioning of the EP, and that it is already at work during an electoral campaign that sees political parties battling for votes from EU citizens. It is therefore ultimately the voters called on to cast their votes in May 2014 who will determine the partisan balance of power in the EP over the next five years, and therefore the nature of the decisions that this institution will make, in relation to the nature of the issues

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submitted to it, while at the same time remaining the framework of great democratic and partisan debate that the EU needs more than ever.

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ANNEX 1. MEPS: BREAKDOWN PER EU COUNTRY

TABLE 1 ► Population and number of MEPs per EU member state

MEMBER STATES	MEPs TO BE ELECTED IN 2014	POPULATION, AS OF 1.1.2013
Germany*	96	80,523,746
France*	74	65,633,194
United Kingdom*	73	63,896,071
Italy*	73	59,685,227
Spain*	54	46,704,308
Poland*	51	38,533,299
Romania*	32	20,020,074
The Netherlands*	26	16,779,575
Belgium	21	11,161,642
Greece	21	11,062,508
Czech Republic	21	10,516,125
Portugal	21	10,487,289
Hungary	21	9,908,798
Sweden	20	9,555,893
Austria	18	8,451,860
Bulgaria	17	7,284,552
Denmark	13	5,602,628
Finland	13	5,426,674
Slovakia	13	5,410,836
Ireland	11	4,591,087
Croatia	11	4,262,140
Lithuania	11	2,971,905
Slovenia	8	2,058,821
Latvia	8	2,023,825
Estonia	6	1,324,814
Cyprus	6	865,878
Luxembourg	6	537,039
Malta	6	421,364
EU28	751	505,701,172
* 8 "key states"	479	391,775,494
%	63.8%	77.5%

Data: European Parliament, Eurostat

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ANNEX 2. POLITICAL BALANCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2009-2014)

MEMBER STATE	POLITICAL COLOUR OF THE COMMISSIONER	PORTFOLIO	POLITICAL COLOUR OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH APPOINTED HIM/HER	POLITICAL COLOUR OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT
Germany	Günther Oettinger (CDU/EPP)	Energy	Right-centre coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)
Austria	Johannes Hahn (ÖVP/EPP)	Regional policy	Left (S&D) in coalition with the EPP	Left (S&D) in a coalition with the EPP
Belgium	Karel de Gucht (centre-right/ALDE)	Trade	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Left-right coalition, left-wing head of government gauche (S&D)
Bulgaria	Kristalina Georgieva (EPP)	International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response	Right (EPP)	Independent head of government, left-centre (S&D-ALDE) government coalition
Cyprus	Androulla Vassiliou (centre/ALDE)	Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth	Far-left (GUE/NGL) in a coalition with the centre	Right-left (EPP) coalition
Croatia	Neven Mimica (centre-left/S&D)	Consumer policy	Left (S&D)	Left-centre coalition (S&D-ALDE)
Denmark	Connie Hedegaard (right/EPP)	Climate Action	Centre (ALDE) in a coalition with the EPP	Left-centre coalition (S&D-ALDE)
Spain	Joaquín Almunia (Socialist party/S&D)	Competition	Left (S&D)	Right (EPP)
Estonia	Siim Kallas (centre-right/ALDE)	Transport	Centre (ALDE) in a coalition with the EPP	Centre (ALDE) in a coalition with the PES

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Finland	Olli Rehn (<i>centre/ALDE</i>)	Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro	Centre (ALDE) in a coalition with the EPP	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)
France	Michel Barnier (<i>UMP/EPP</i>)	Internal Market and Services	Right (PPE)	Left (S&D)
Greece	Maria Damanaki (<i>left/S&D</i>)	Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	Left (S&D)	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)
Hungary	László Andor (<i>centre-left/S&D</i>)	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	Independent head of government, left-wing government (S&D)	Right (EPP)
Ireland	Máire Geoghegan Quinn (<i>centre-right/ALDE</i>)	Research, Innovation and Sciences	Centre-greens coalition, centre head of government (ALDE)	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)
Italy	Antonio Tajani (<i>Forza Italia/PPE</i>)	Industry and Entrepreneurship	Right (PPE)	Government of national union, left-wing head of government (S&D)
Latvia	Andris Piebalgs (<i>centre-right/PPE</i>)	Development	Right (EPP)	Right (PPE)
Lithuania	Algirdas Šemeta (<i>right/PPE</i>)	Taxation, Customs, Statistics, Audit and Anti-Fraud	Right-centre coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Left-right coalition (S&D)
Luxembourg	Viviane Reding (<i>centre-right/EPP</i>)	Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Centre-left coalition, centre head of government (ALDE)

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Source : Yves Bertoncini, Thierry Chopin and Claire Taglione-Darmé

Malta	Tonio Borg (<i>centre-right/EPP</i>)	Health	Right (EPP)	Left (S&D)
The Netherlands	Neelie Kroes (<i>right/ALDE</i>)	Digital Agenda	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Centre-left coalition, centre head of government (ALDE)
Poland	Janusz Lewandowski (<i>centre-right/EPP</i>)	Financial Programming and Budget	Right (ECR)	Right (EPP)
Portugal	José Manuel Barroso (<i>centre-right/EPP</i>)	President of the European Commission	Left (S&D)	Right (EPP)
Czech Republic	Štefan Füle (<i>centre-left/S&D</i>)	Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy	Right-left-greens coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Left-right coalition (S&D)
Romania	Dacian Cioloș (EPP)	Agriculture and Rural Development	Right-left coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Left-centre coalition, left-wing head of government (S&D)
United Kingdom	Catherine Ashton (<i>Labour/S&D</i>)	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	Left (S&D)	Right-centre coalition, right-wing head of government (ECR)
Slovakia	Maroš Šefčovic (<i>centre-left/S&D</i>)	Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration	Left (S&D)	Left (S&D)
Slovenia	Janez Potočnik (<i>centre-left/ALDE</i>)	Environment	Left-right coalition, left-wing head of government (S&D)	Centre-left coalition with ALDE head of government
Sweden	Cecilia Malmström (<i>centre-right/ALDE</i>)	Home Affairs	Right-centre coalition, right-wing head of government (EPP)	Right-wing government (EPP)

ANNEX 3. THE VOTING RULES IN FORCE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: A HINDRANCE TO THE FORMATION OF CONFRONTATION MAJORITIES?

The relative vigour in the expression of partisan divides within the European Parliament partly stems from the voting rules in force within the Parliament (*see Table 2*), and which appear as a hindrance to the formation of a left-right partisan majority. MEPs often have to vote as part of “the majority of EP members” (and not as part of those present), or even sometimes reach 2/3 of votes cast. Even though the rate of absenteeism is not very high when votes are cast (somewhere between 10 % and 20 %), and is often better than that recorded in national parliaments, such voting rules raise the necessary threshold to create a political majority and automatically leads to the expression of transpartisan choices.

The existence of such voting rules is mainly linked to the desire to promote a logic of consensus, which also allows all political groups to exert influence on the final decisions of the EP. Considering that it is now as important to encourage the expression of clearer divisions at the time of voting would however lead us to arbitrate in favour of modifying these rules and to the lowering of the thresholds required to constitute a majority, by opting as often as possible for the simple majority of votes cast.

The “small parties” represented in Strasbourg could naturally feel disadvantaged by such a change: their influence would in reality only be slightly reduced in relation to what they currently exert, and whose limited nature logically stems from the fact that they received a relatively small number of votes. The two main groups in the EP, EPP and S&D, would also be less sure of being part of the majorities that win the votes. It therefore remains to be seen whether the main groups of the EP will support such a reform, one that would allow them to both structure the current majorities around them, but which would also reduce the number of voting instances for which their additional votes are counted. The voting rules in the EP are set by the Treaties, and are therefore inviolable

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in the short term, but some of them are established by rules of procedure, for example when it comes to budget votes. The future MEPs could therefore easily decide to amend these rules of procedure, before requesting a future revision of the Treaties. This two-stage transformation would allow the EP to enter more purposefully into the partisan age, by giving its choices increased coherence and visibility in the eyes of the citizens it is meant to represent.

TABLE 2 ▶ Voting rules of the European Parliament as set out by its rules of procedure or by the Treaties (when indicated *)

VOTING RULES IN TERMS OF NOMINATION/DEPOSITION	
Internal elections at the European Parliament	
President of the European Parliament	1 st to 3 rd round: absolute majority of votes cast 4 th round: (if necessary) idem but only between the 2 MEPs obtaining the greatest number of votes in the 3 rd round
Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament	1 st round: absolute majority of votes cast 2 nd round: (if necessary) idem 1 st round 3 rd round: (if necessary) relative majority
Quaestors of the European Parliament	Idem Vice-Presidents
Interruption of above terms	3/5 majority of votes cast
Investiture/censure of the European Commission	
Investiture President of Commission	Majority of votes cast
Investiture of Commission	Majority of votes cast
Censure of the Commission*	2/3 votes cast representing a majority of members making up the Parliament (Article 234 TFEU)
Other nominations	
Members of the Court of Auditors	Majority of votes cast for each candidate
Mediator (nomination & deposition)	Majority of votes cast
VOTING RULES IN LEGISLATIVE MATTERS	
Legislative initiative (request to the Commission to submit a proposal)*	Majority of Parliament members (Article 225 TFEU)

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 1st reading

(codecision, consultation and cooperation procedures)

Amendments to Commission's proposal	Majority of votes cast
Rejection of Commission's proposal	Majority of votes cast

 2nd reading

(codecision and cooperation procedures)

Adoption of or amendments to Commission's proposal*	Majority of Parliament members (Article 294.2 TFEU)
Rejection of Commission's proposal*	Majority of Parliament members (Article 294.2 TFEU)

 3rd reading (codecision procedure)*

Majority of votes cast (Article 295.5 TFEU)

VOTING RULES IN BUDGETARY MATTERS

 1st phase

Draft amendments	Majority of Parliament members
Amendment proposals	Majority of votes cast
Draft amendments exceeding the maximum rate of increase	3/5 of votes cast representing a majority of Parliament members

 2nd phase

Draft amendments	2/3 of votes cast representing a majority of Parliament members
Overall rejection of the budget	2/3 of votes cast representing a majority of Parliament members
Provisional twelfths mechanism	3/5 of votes cast representing a majority of Parliament members

Others

Setting of a new maximum rate of increase	3/5 of votes cast representing a majority of Parliament members
Refusal of discharge	Majority of votes cast

VOTING RULES REGARDING CONSENT PROCEDURES

Election of MEPs (uniform procedure or common principles)*	Majority of members of the European Parliament (Article 223 TFEU)
Specific missions of the ECB*	Majority of votes cast (Article 127.6 TFEU)
Modifications of the Statute of the European system of Central Banks*	Majority of votes cast (Article 129.5 TFEU)

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Missions, priority objectives and organisation of structural funds*	Majority of votes cast (Article 177 TFEU)
International agreements and association agreements*	Majority of votes cast (Articles 218.3 and 217 TFEU)
Accession of new states (recommendation and acceptance)*	Majority of Parliament members (Article 56 TEU)
Establishment of infringement of the Treaty principles*	2/3 of votes cast representing a majority of members (Article 7.6 TEU)
INTERNAL FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	
Convening of Parliament outside of scheduled sessions*	Majority of Parliament members (Article 229 TFEU)
Plenary session outside seat (Strasbourg)	Majority of votes cast
Rejection of an appeal before the Court of Justice	Majority of votes cast
Establishment of a Commission of Inquiry*	1/4 of Parliament members (Article 226 TFEU)
Adoption of and amendments to the rules of procedure of the European Parliament*	Majority of Parliament members (Article 232 TFEU)
MISCELLANEOUS	
Recommendations	Majority of votes cast
Legislative or non-legislative resolutions	Majority of votes cast
Rules relative to the political parties at European level	Majority of votes cast
Opinion on the derogations granted to states not adopting the euro*	Majority of votes cast (Article 141 TFEU)

Source: EU Treaties and European Parliament data, catalogue by Y. Bertoncini and T. Chopin, in *Politique européenne. États, pouvoirs et citoyens de l'Union européenne*, Presses de Sciences Po/Dalloz, coll. "Amphis", 2010.

* Article 231 of TFEU stipulates that "Save as otherwise provided in the Treaties, the European Parliament shall act by a majority of the votes cast".

ANNEX 4. PROPORTION OF VOTES WON BY EACH PARTISAN GROUP PER TYPE OF POLITICAL ISSUE

VoteWatch Europe data relative to the roll-call votes for the July 2009-March 2014 period showed that the three political groups belonging most frequently to victorious coalitions are respectively :

- the EPP group (89.68 % of winning votes)
- the ALDE group (86.47 %)
- the S&D group (83.67 %).

The Greens group arrives in 4th position (67.3 %) followed by the ECR group (55.54 %), then the ELD (52.06 %) and GUE groups (52.01 %) – there are no precise data concerning the non-attached groups, which would probably be situated at slightly lower levels.

These data mean that, from a global standpoint:

- it was the EPP, ALDE and S&D groups that had most influence on the content of the European Parliament's (EP) decisions between 2009 and 2014,
- the other groups also supported these decisions, in significant proportions, either two thirds for the Greens and slightly less than half for ECR, GUE and ELD.

It is extremely instructive to refine this analysis on a more sectoral basis, in order to measure how the European Parliament groups have positioned themselves in relation to the political issues that are put to them (agriculture, internal market, environment, etc), so as to better distinguish those that had most influence on the content of EP decisions over the past five years.

1. Groups that participated most often in winning coalitions

It is possible to indicate how often the political groups appeared in the top three groups that approved EP decisions most often for all 21 fields monitored

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by VoteWatch Europe - fields that correspond to the political issues dealt with by the 21 parliamentary committees of the European Parliament (see Table 3).

TABLE 3 ► Number of times when the political group was in the top three in terms of percentage of winning votes (July 2009-March 2014)*

	EPP	ALDE	S&D	GREENS	ECR	GUE	ELD
1 st group	12	6	3			1	
2 nd group	6	6	9	1			
3 rd group	3	6	6	2	2		1
Total	21	18	18	3	2	1	1

Source : Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin, data www.VoteWatch Europe.eu.

* In some cases, certain political groups are *ex aequo*.

This initial quantitative assessment confirms the prominent decision-making role exercised by the EPP during the 2009-2014 term, the same goes for the strong participation of the ALDE group and, to a lesser extent, the S&D group, in forming winning coalitions when votes are cast.

It also confirms that the less important groups, numerically speaking, can also set the tone in certain specific areas : for example, the Greens in the areas of gender equality and budgetary control, the ECR group in the field of the internal market and consumer protection, the GUE group in the area of petitions and the ELD group in the field of agriculture.

2. Groups that participated most often in winning coalitions per sector

A more detailed quantitative assessment allows to determine which groups participated most often in winning coalitions, in relation to the political issues, by ranking the top three groups with most winning votes. This assessment allows to classify the winning coalition majorities into four main categories, for which one could consider that the groups mentioned had most influence on the content of EP decisions for the 2009-2014 period.

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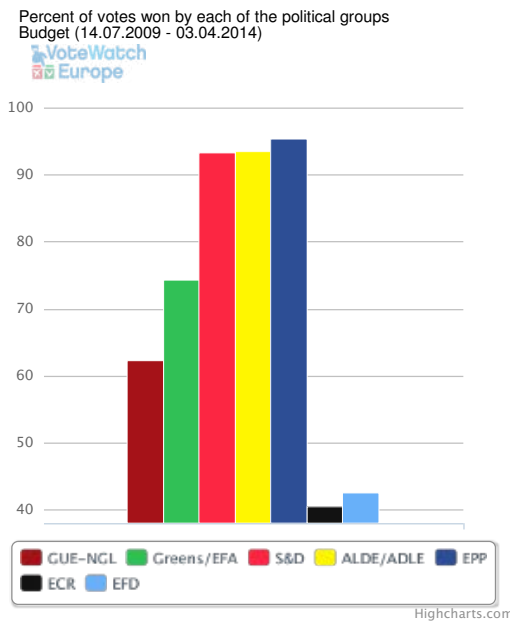
2.1. Issues on which the EPP, S&D and ALDE participated most often in winning coalitions

The three groups EPP, S&D and ALDE participated most often in winning coalitions on ten political issues:

- Budgetary issues and issues linked to regional development.

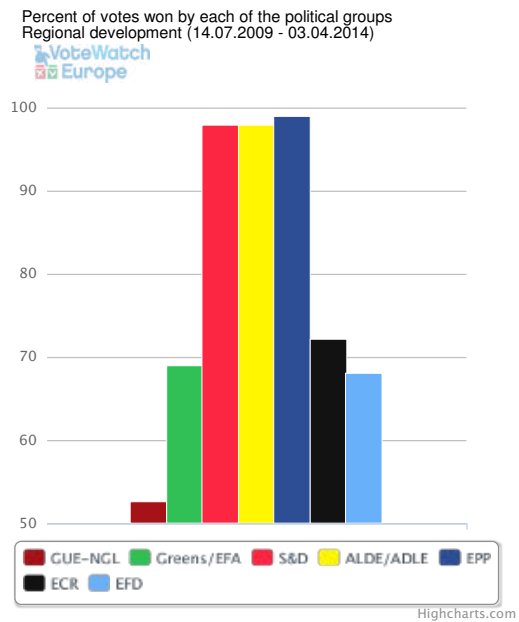
GRAPH 1

Percent of votes won by each political group in the budgetary field (07/2009 – 03/2014)



GRAPH 2

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of regional development (07/2009 – 03/2014)

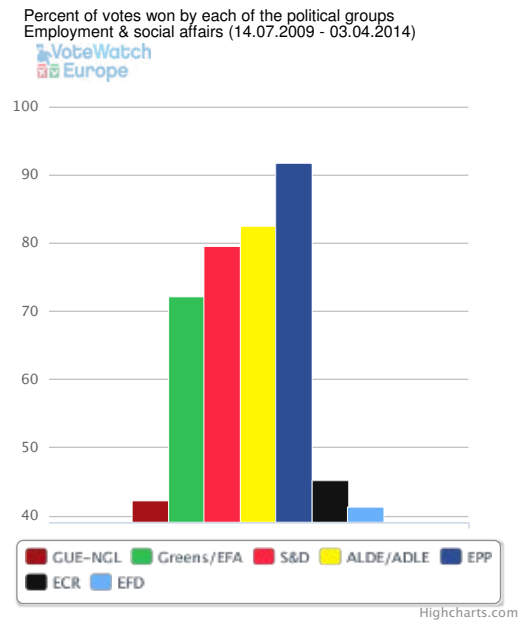


- Issues concerning “Social affairs and Employment”, “Environment and Public Health” and “Industry, Research and Energy”

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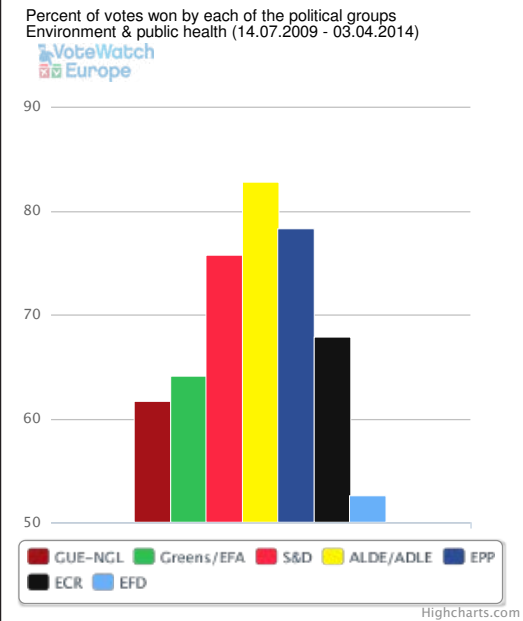
GRAPH 3

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of employment and social affairs (07/2009 – 03/2014)

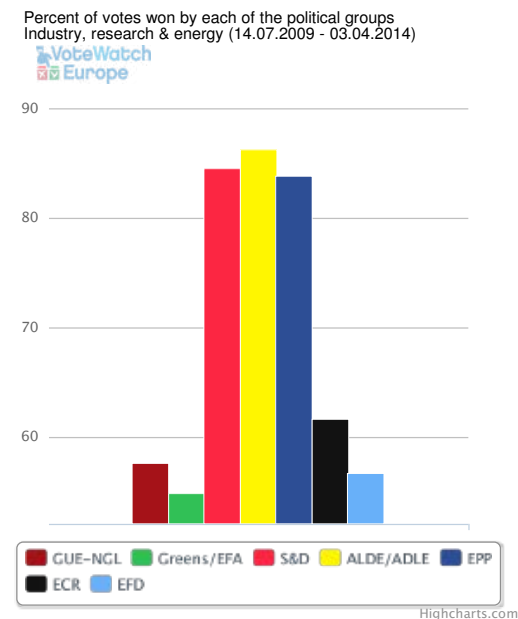


GRAPH 4

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of the environment and public health (07/2009 – 03/2014)



GRAPH 5 Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of industry, research and energy (07/2009 – 03/2014)

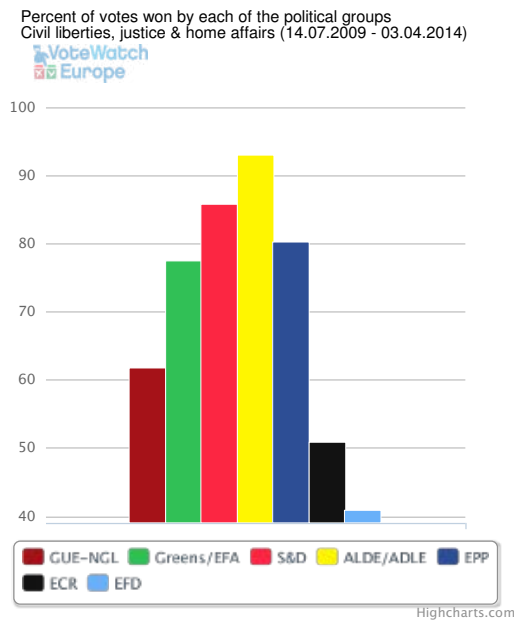


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- Issues concerning “Civil Liberties, Home Affairs and Justice” and “Constitutional and Inter-institutional Affairs”

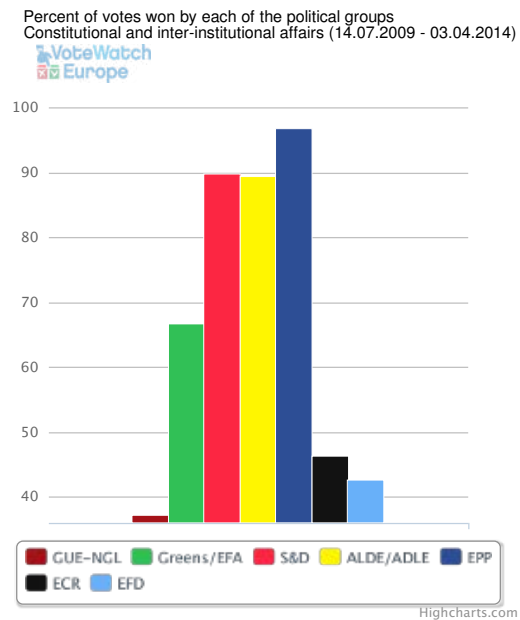
GRAPH 6

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of civil liberties, justice and home affairs (07/2009 – 03/2014)



GRAPH 7

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of constitutional and inter-institutional affairs (07/2009 – 03/2014)

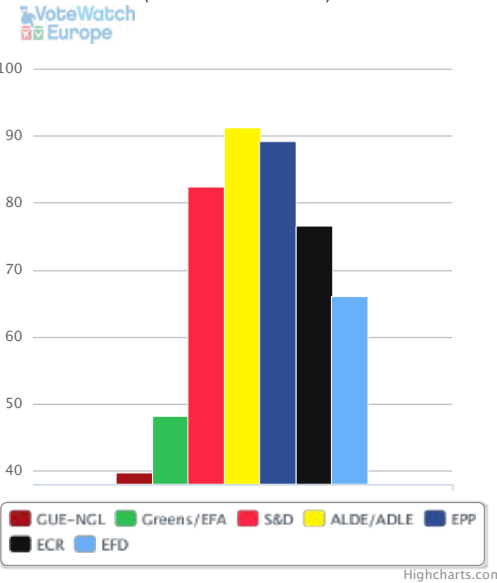


- Lastly, international issues: “International Trade”, “Development” and “Foreign and Security Policy”

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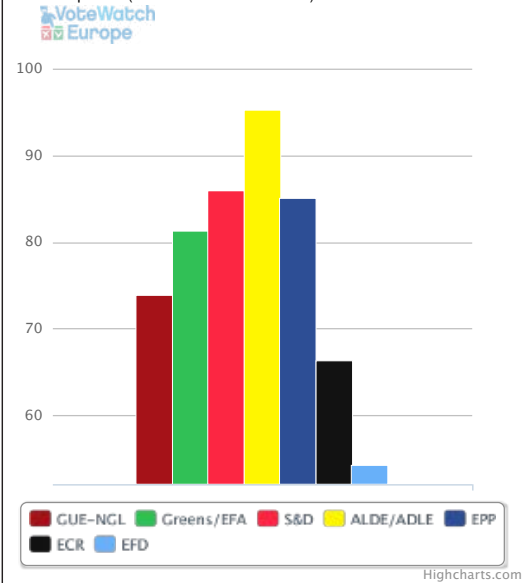
GRAPH 8
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of international trade (07/2009 – 03/2014)

Percent of votes won by each of the political groups International trade (14.07.2009 - 03.04.2014)



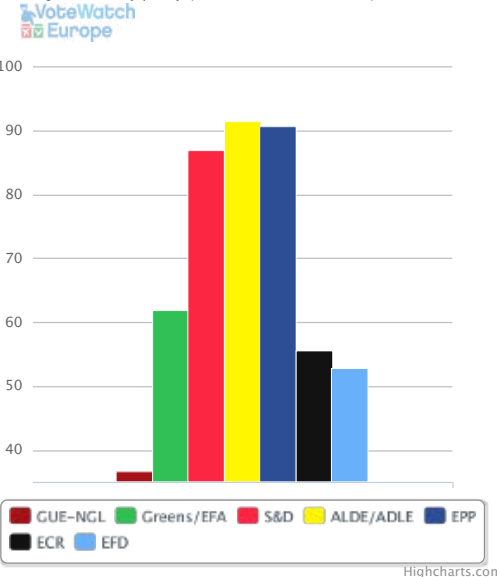
GRAPH 9
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of development (07/2009 – 03/2014)

Percent of votes won by each of the political groups Development (14.07.2009 - 03.04.2014)



GRAPH 10 Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of foreign and security policy (07/2009 – 03/2014)

Percent of votes won by each of the political groups Foreign & security policy (14.07.2009 - 03.04.2014)



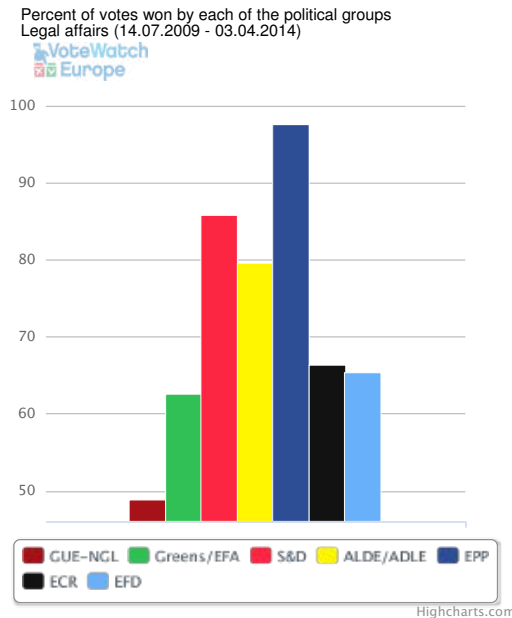
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2.2. Issues on which the EPP and S&D groups participated most often in winning coalitions, with the backing of other groups

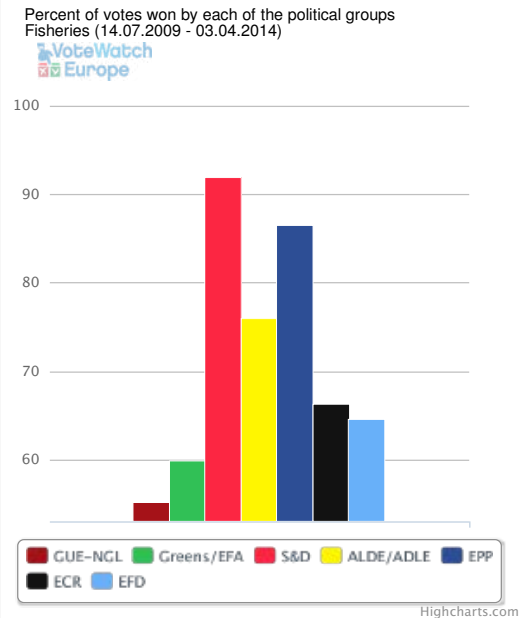
Both the EPP and S&D groups also participated most often in winning coalitions for six other political issues:

- “Legal Affairs”, “Fisheries”, “Transport and Tourism” and the “Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament”, with, in each case, the support of the ALDE group:

GRAPH 11
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of legal affairs (07/2009 – 03/2014)

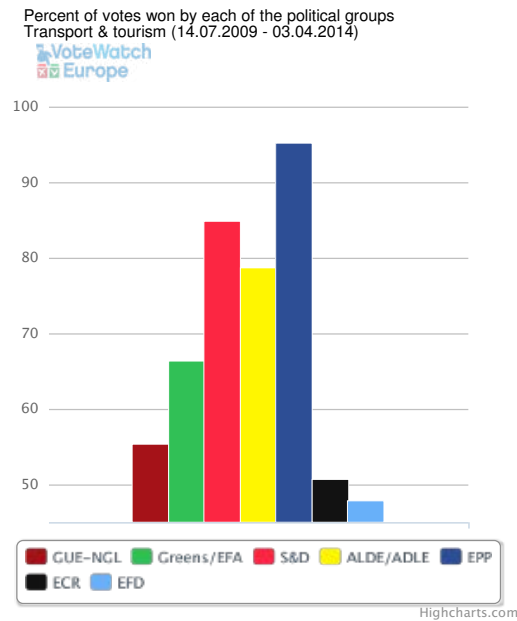


GRAPH 12
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of fisheries (07/2009 – 03/2014)

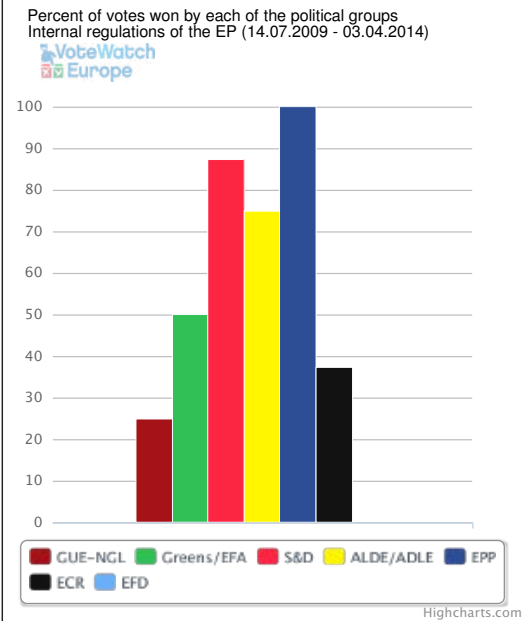


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GRAPH 13
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of transport and tourism (07/2009 – 03/2014)

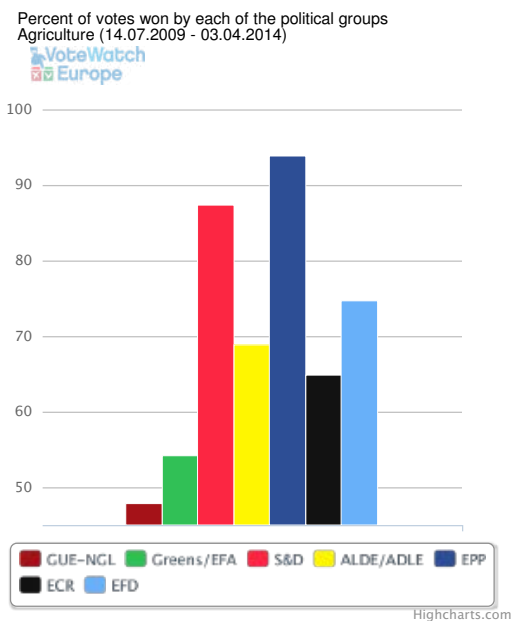


GRAPH 14
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of rules of procedure of the EP (07/2009 – 03/2014)



- Issues linked to agriculture, with the support of the ELD group:

GRAPH 15
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of agriculture (07/2009 – 03/2014)

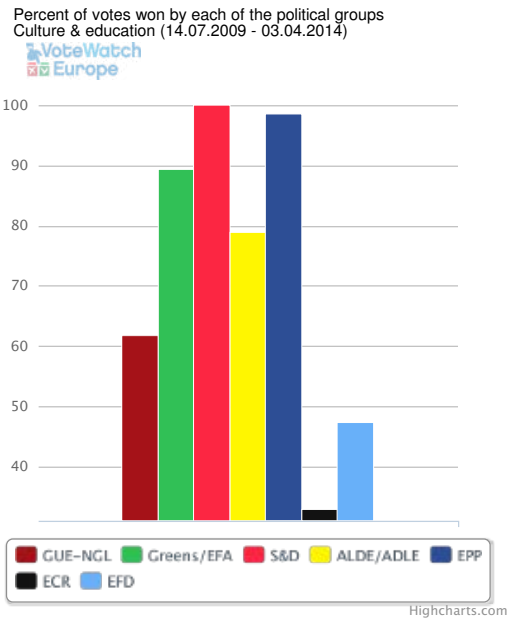


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- Issues linked to “Culture and Education” with support from the Greens:

GRAPH 16

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of culture and education (07/2009 – 03/2014)



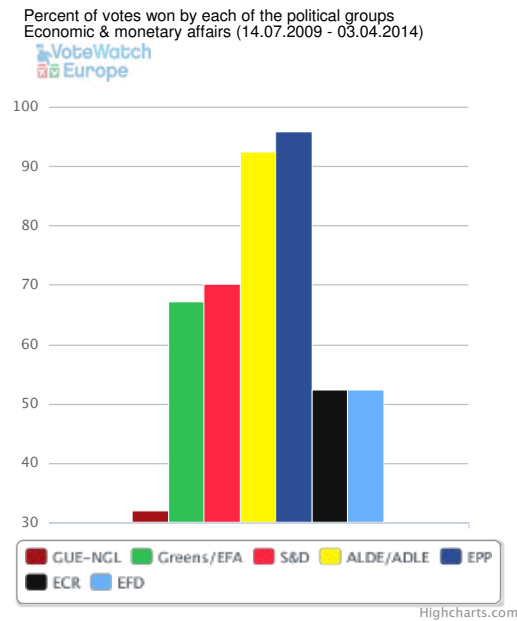
2.3. Issues on which the EPP and ALDE participated most often in winning coalitions

The EPP and ALDE groups participated most often in winning coalitions in two areas: “Economic and Monetary Affairs” with the support of the S&D group on the one hand, and “Internal Market and Consumer Protection”, with the support of the ECR group on the other.

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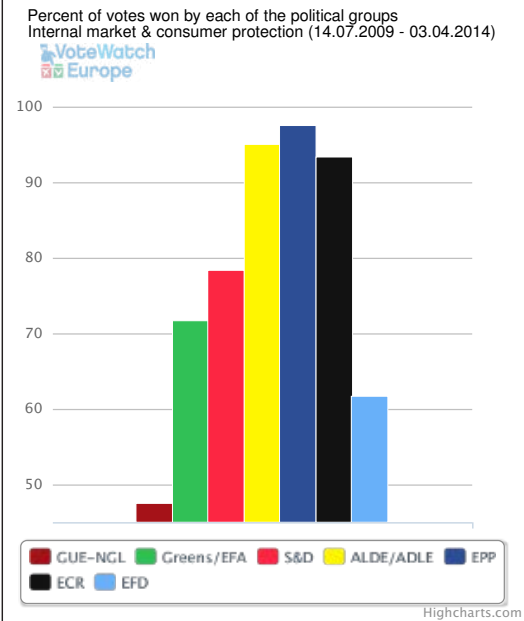
GRAPH 17

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of economic and monetary affairs (07/2009 – 03/2014)



GRAPH 18

Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of internal market and consumer protection (07/2009 – 03/2014)



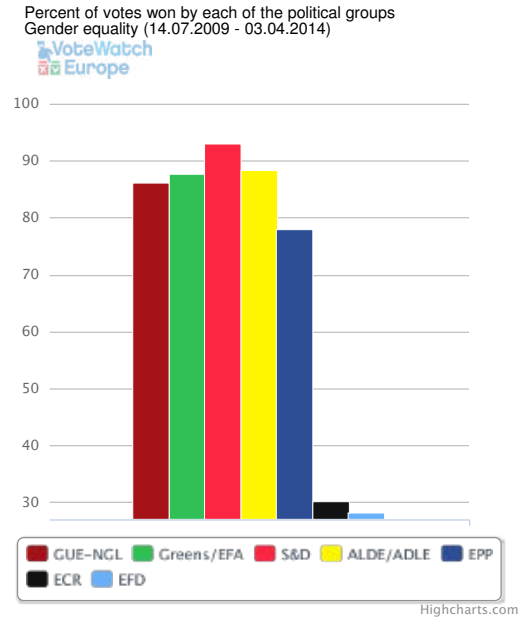
2.4. Issues on which more diverse groups participated most often in winning coalitions

On three other political issues, trios of a different nature brought together *de facto* the groups that participated most often in winning coalitions:

- The S&D group, Liberals and Greens for votes on gender equality:

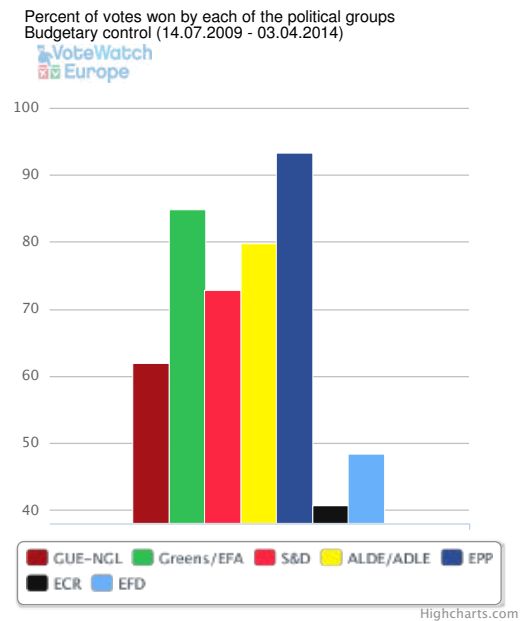
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GRAPH 19
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of gender equality (07/2009 – 03/2014)



- The EPP group, Greens and Liberals for votes on budgetary control:

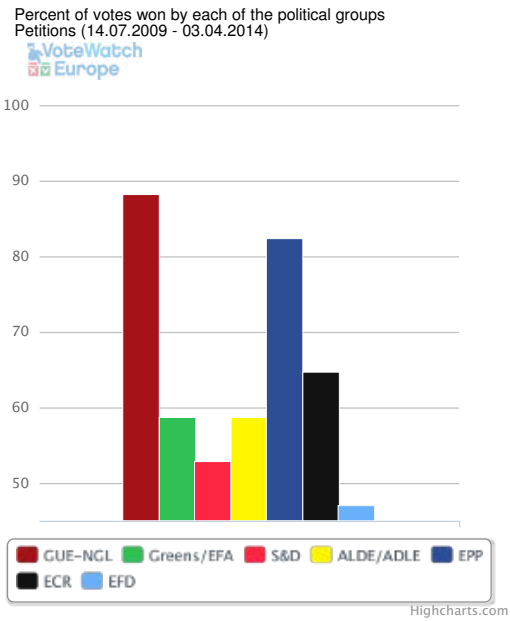
GRAPH 20
Percent of votes won by each political group in the field of budgetary control (07/2009 – 03/2014)



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- Lastly, the GUE and EPP groups for votes relating to petitions:

GRAPH 21
Percent of votes won by each political group
in the field of petitions (07/2009 – 03/2014)



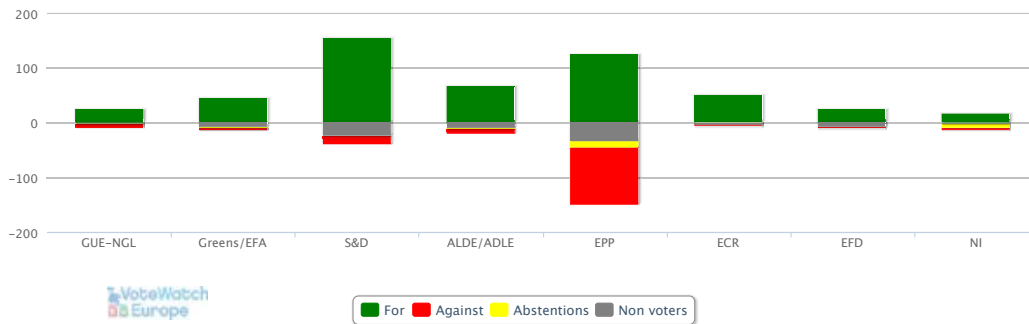
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ANNEX 5. 21 SYMBOLIC VOTES
WHAT EUROPEAN BALANCE OF POWER?

GRAPH 22

Should the seat of the European Parliament be transferred from Strasbourg to Brussels?*

The vote of all MEPs

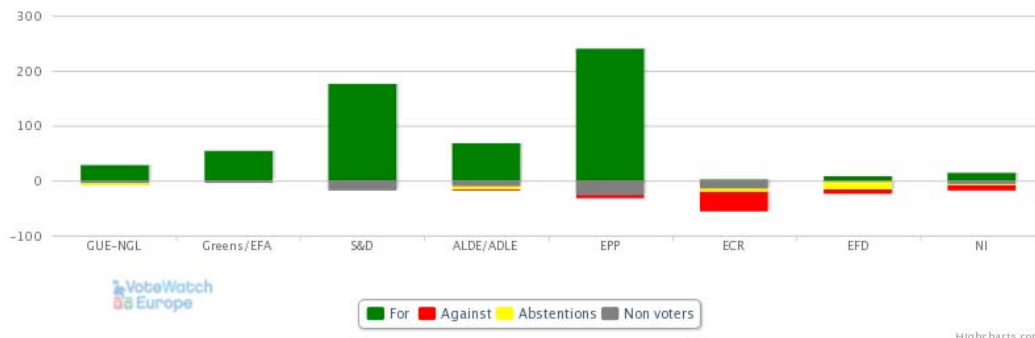


* This question was asked during a vote on the 2014 budget.

GRAPH 23

Should a Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived be created?

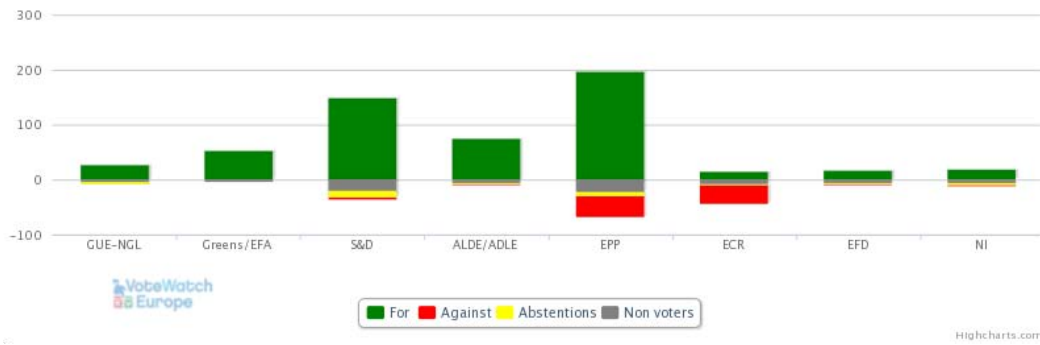
The vote of all MEPs



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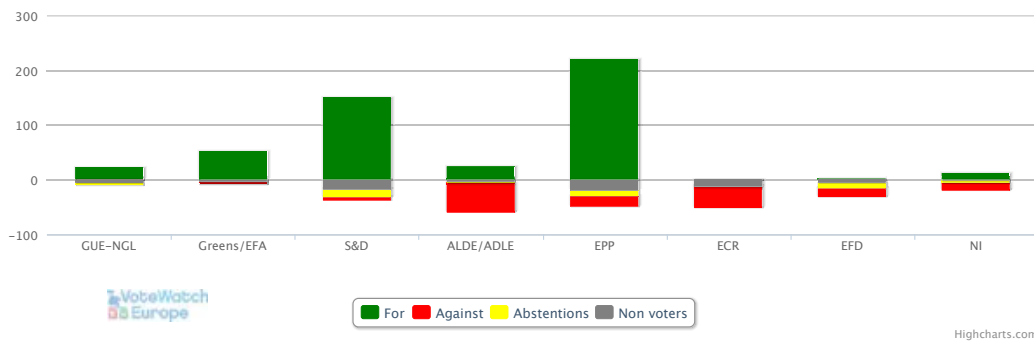
GRAPH 24

Should the EU restrict the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?
The vote of all MEPs



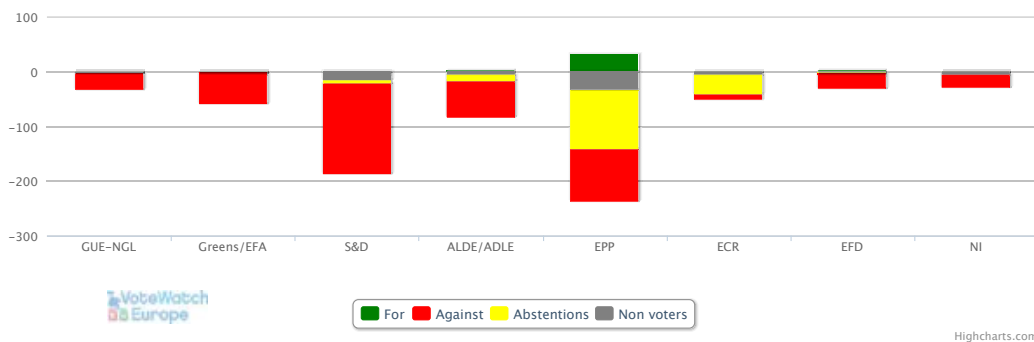
GRAPH 25

Should a new financial transaction tax be imposed within the EU?
The vote of all MEPs



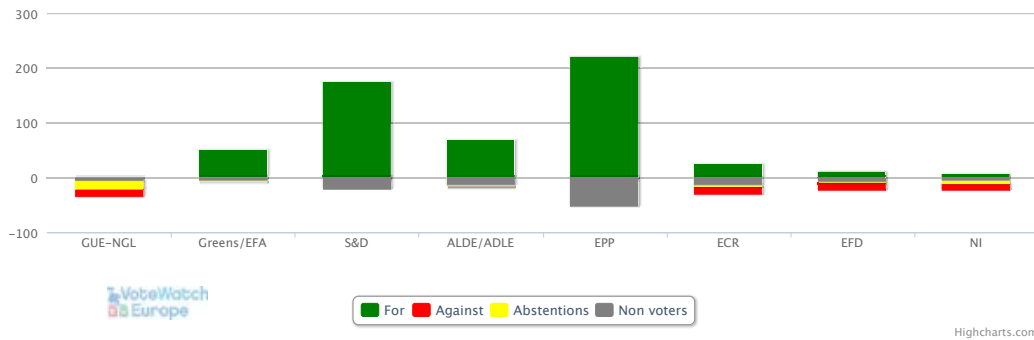
GRAPH 26

Should the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) be adopted?
The vote of all MEPs

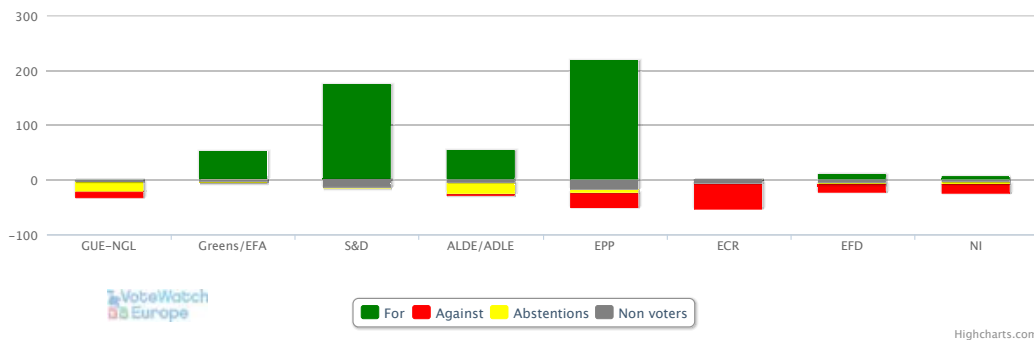


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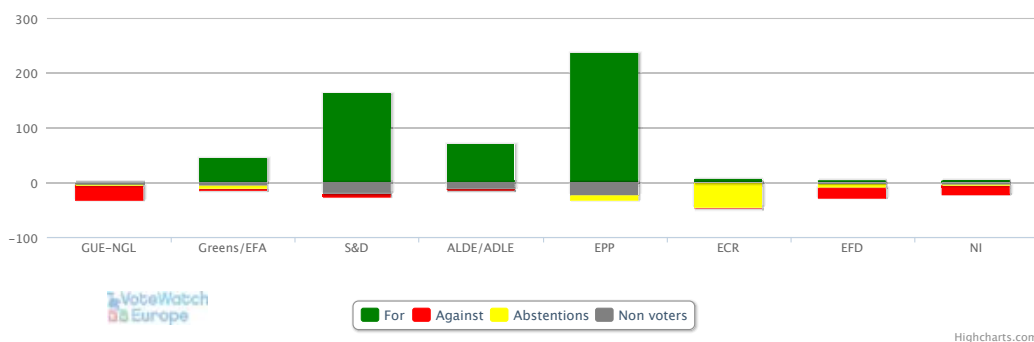
GRAPH 27
Should the EU create a banking union?
The vote of all MEPs



GRAPH 28
Should euro area member states pool their public debts by creating eurobonds?
The vote of all MEPs

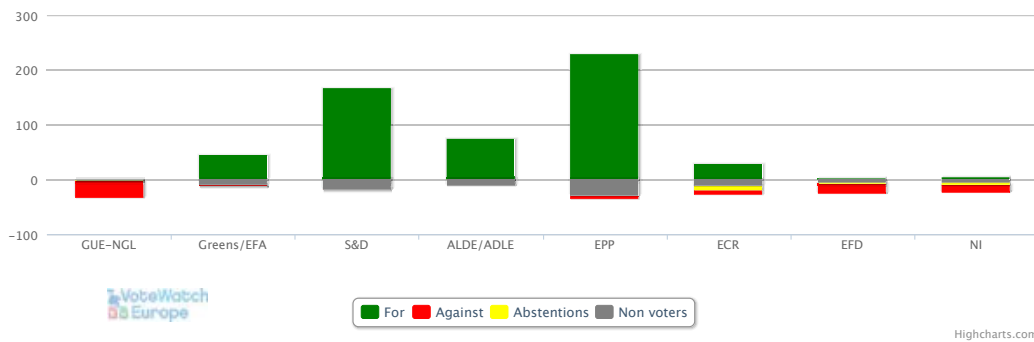


GRAPH 29
Should the European Commission strengthen the supervision of budgetary and economic policies of euro area member states?
The vote of all MEPs

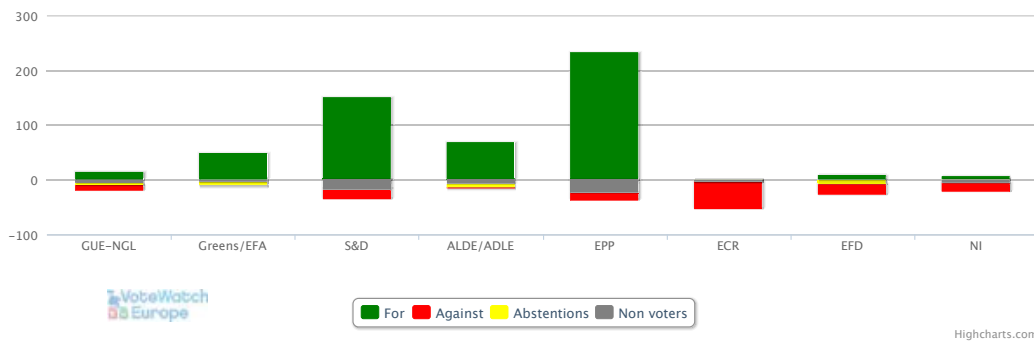


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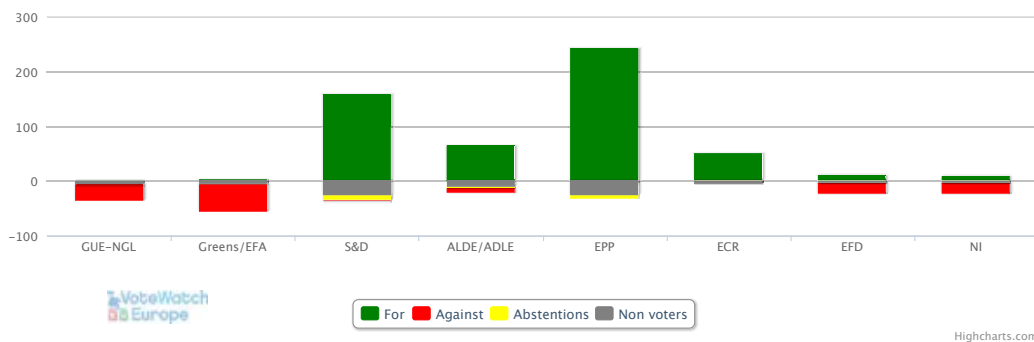
GRAPH 30
Should the EU have its own diplomatic service?
The vote of all MEPs



GRAPH 31
Should the EU have a genuine system of "own resources" for its budget?
The vote of all MEPs



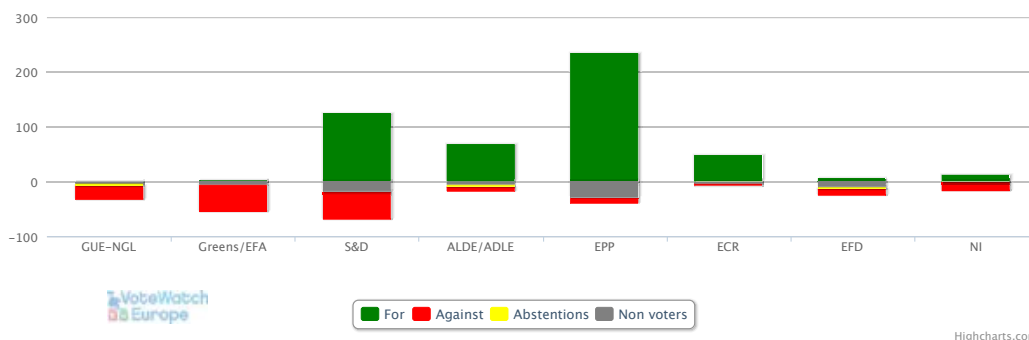
GRAPH 32
Should the EU budget be increased and be made more flexible?
The vote of all MEPs



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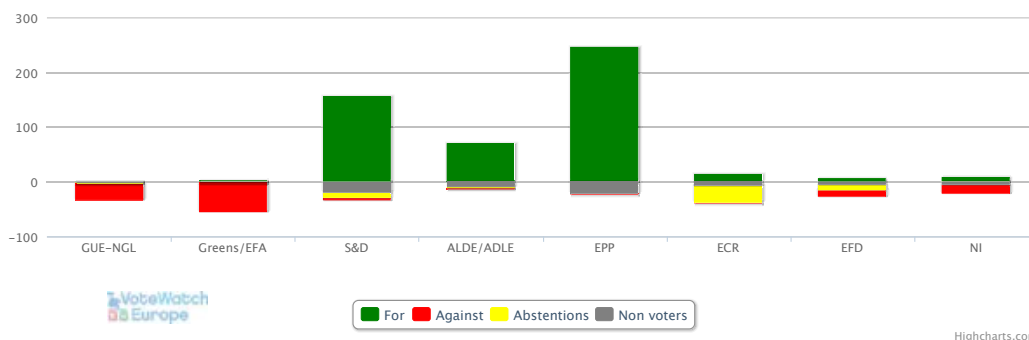
GRAPH 33

Should agricultural subsidies remain a budgetary priority for the EU?
The vote of all MEPs



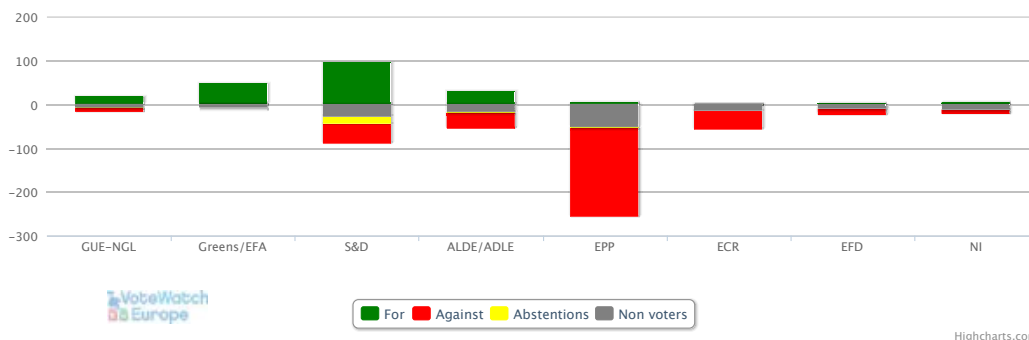
GRAPH 34

Should the EU authorise the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders?
The vote of all MEPs



GRAPH 35

Should the EU abandon nuclear energy?
The vote of all MEPs

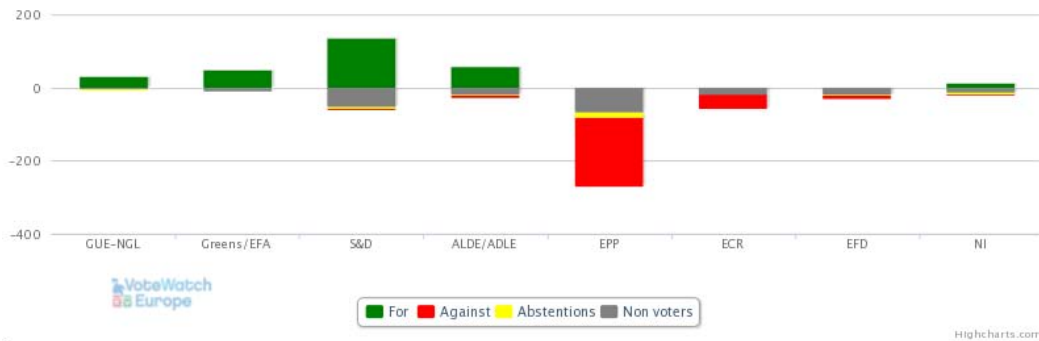


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GRAPH 36

Should the Commission temporarily suspend the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (SWIFT vote)?

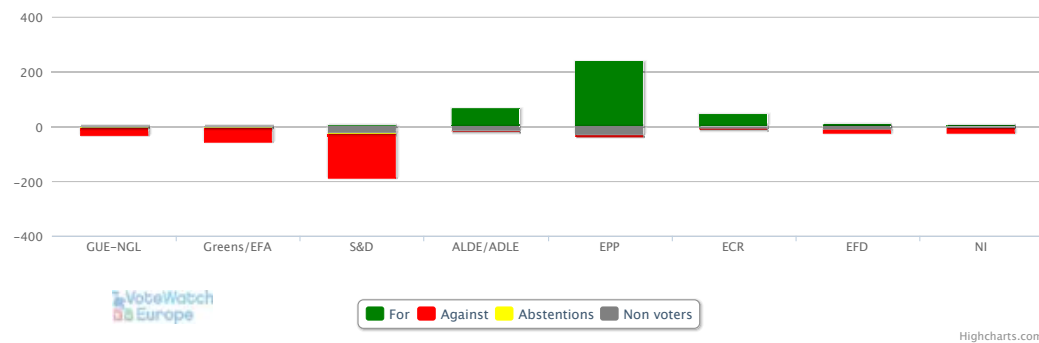
The vote of all MEPs



GRAPH 37

Should the EU strengthen and extend its internal market for services?

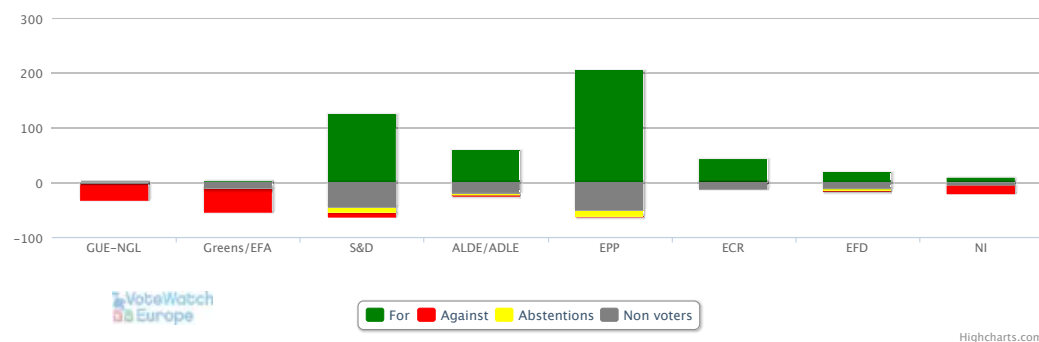
The vote of all MEPs



GRAPH 38

Should the EU create a single market with the United States?

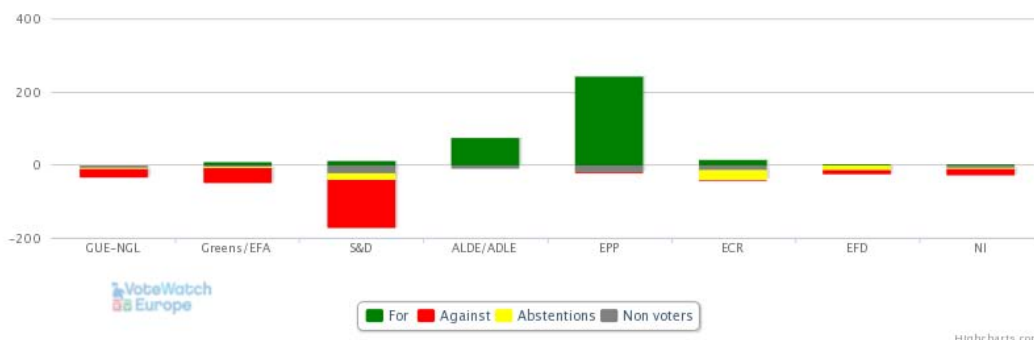
The vote of all MEPs



FACES ON DIVIDES: THE MAY 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

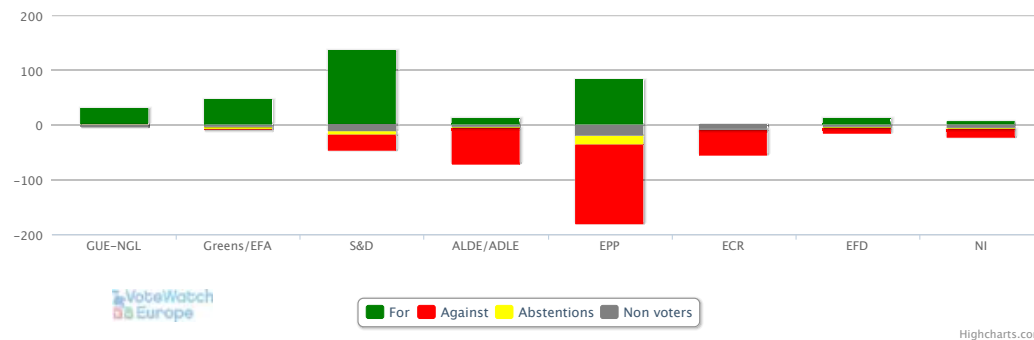
GRAPH 39

Should the EU strengthen the supervision of budgetary and economic policies of euro area member states?
The vote of all MEPs



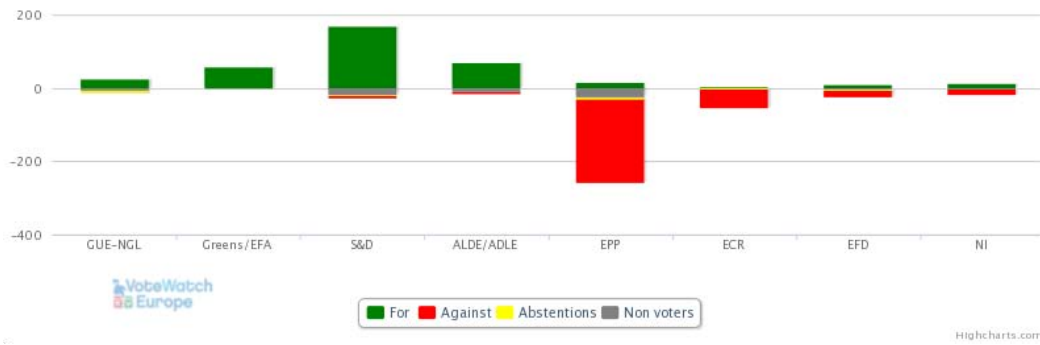
GRAPH 40

Should the minimum period of fully paid maternity leave move from 14 to 20 weeks across the EU?
The vote of all MEPs

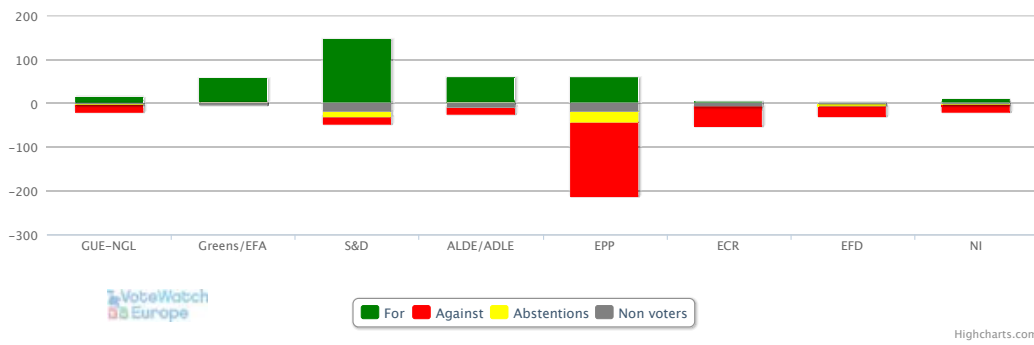


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GRAPH 41
Should there be a cap on the use of biofuels?
The vote of all MEPs



GRAPH 42
Should the EU increase the cost of economic activities that pollute?
The vote of all MEPs



ANNEX 6. PROGRAMMES PRESENTED BY THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES

It is essential to complete the “retrospective” voting analyses contained in this study with a more forward-looking examination of what the parties and candidates propose in order to address the economic, social, political and diplomatic challenges that the EU is likely to face in the short and medium term.

Such a study should focus on the “manifestos” and other “programmes” adopted by the main European political parties involved in this election campaign as well as on those that the parties and candidates in the running have chosen to propose to voters in each of the 28 EU member states.

The following links (*see Table 5*) provide access to the programmes of the main European political parties.

TABLE 5 ► The programmes presented by the European political parties

EUROPEAN PARTY (FROM RIGHT TO LEFT)	MANIFESTO	FRENCH PARTY AFFILIATED
Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy (MELD)	-	Mouvement pour la France (MPF)
Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR)	-	NA
European People's Party (EPP)	http://juncker.epp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/EPPMANIFESTO_EN_SPREADHR.pdf	Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) Union des démocrates et indépendants (UDI)
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)	http://www.aldeparty.eu/fr/news/alde-party-election-manifesto-europe-works	NA
European Democratic Party (EDP)	http://www.pde-edp.eu/content/userfiles/files/Manifeste/pde-manifeste-en.pdf	Mouvement démocrate (MoDem)

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European Green Party (EGP)	-	Europe Écologie- Les Verts (EELV)
European Free Alliance (EFA)	http://www.e-f-a.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/EFA_3263_manifesto_ENG_230114.pdf	Union démocratique bretonne (UDB) Parti occitan (POC) Mouvement région Savoie (MRS) Notre pays, le Parti alsacien, Parti de la nation corse (PNC)
Party of European Socialists (PES)	http://www.pes.eu/sites/www.pes.org/files/pes_manifesto_-_adopted_by_the_pes_election_congress_en.pdf	Parti socialiste (PS)
Party of the European Left (EL)	http://www.european-left.org/sites/default/files/platform_en_-_final.pdf#overlay-context=positions/electoral-manifesto-party-european-left-european-elections-2014	Front de gauche, Nouveau parti anticapitaliste (NPA)

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AUTHORS



Yves Bertoncini

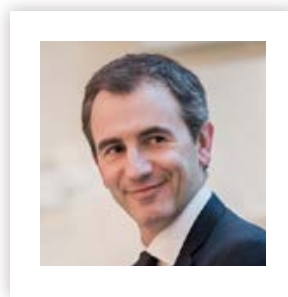
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FACES ON DIVIDES

THE MAY 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The European elections that will take place from 22-25 May next are an important democratic event for European citizens. In this context, this study, co-written by Yves Bertoncini and Thierry Chopin and published by Robert Schuman Foundation and Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute, contains several extremely enlightening elements of information and analysis for the citizens invited to go to the polling booths.

The first part of this study firstly recalls the extent of powers exercised by the European Parliament (EP), the importance of political issues on which its members are requested to decide, but also the key role played by the political groups established within this institution.

The second part of this study presents the “variable-geometry majorities” that form within the EP, in relation to the issues put to the vote of the MEPs: “consensus majorities”, “grand-coalition majorities” and “confrontation majorities”, thanks to data provided by VoteWatch Europe. It clearly elucidates how the French and European MEPs voted in relation to their partisan beliefs, for the symbolic votes of the 2009-2014 parliamentary term.

Lastly, the third part of this study provides highly informative elements on the impact of the vote of 25 May next, based on available opinion polls, which predict a very indecisive struggle. It confirms that, given the proportional representation system in place, no political group will be able to take the majority of seats alone, and that majority coalitions will therefore continue to be formed. It also recalls that it is in relation to the balance of power established by the European voters on the evening of 25 May, that the content of decisions within the EP will be determined for next 5 years.

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