



THE ITALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE THINK TANK

# EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024: POLITICAL SCENARIOS. What climate for the next Europe?

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# Summary

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## 1. Executive summary

The 2024 European elections will be a key moment for the future of the European Green Deal and the Union's climate policies. The Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen has, over the past five years, proposed and built the policy framework for achieving climate neutrality to 2050. The future Commission and the new European Parliament will be able to continue on this path, ensuring that the 2030 targets needed to avert the most disastrous effects of climate change are met. They will also, and most importantly, be able to make the energy transition socioeconomically sustainable.

The start of the election campaign would suggest possible substantial changes in European climate and environmental policies. To test how far these might become reality, we have elaborated four possible policy scenarios based on projections available as of June 2023 and the dynamics among political groups and member states. For this elaboration, it is indeed important to consider both changes in the institutions representing the member states (European Council and Council of the European Union) and in the European Parliament, which is directly elected by citizens.

**From the analysis of the composition of governmental institutions, a convergence toward the center of the political spectrum can be observed. The internal balances in the European Council are not expected to change much. There is no doubt that countries led by center-right or right-wing governments will retain a majority in the European Council.**

What does it mean for climate? There is not necessarily a correlation between political affiliation and climate policies. In many countries, climate is a cross-cutting issue. In some cases, the transition is experienced as a development opportunity and, as a result, climate goals are supported regardless of the color of the governmental team. To check for possible correlations, we analyzed voting on energy and climate issues by government representatives over the past year.<sup>1</sup> While center-right-led governments are more likely to vote against climate policies than center or center-left governments, most conservative European governments still voted in favor of climate.

**Considering past dynamics, the shift toward the center of European governments would not in itself be an obstacle to electing a Commission**

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in the Council of the EU, ministers from each member country with responsibility for, for example, climate and energy sit

## **president who would continue what has been done in recent years through the European Green Deal.**

From the European Parliament, however, come less reassuring signals with respect to the resilience of EU climate policies. The loss of influence of historically pro-European and more climate-friendly parties, combined with the increased representation of the Euroskeptic conservative right-wing political groups, could reduce the hemicycle's climate ambitions. Indeed, analyzing the voting behavior on climate legislation over the past year shows **a strong heterogeneity of thinking on climate among the European right-wing parties.** The European political groups projected to record the largest losses are both the moderate center-right, of which von der Leyen is an expression, and the European Greens; thus showing an emerging criticism of both the work of the Commission and the Green Deal.

Within the current European Parliament, the majority that supported EU climate policies was very solid in the vast majority of votes. On the specific measures there has been such broad support that, if votes were taken today and considering current projections, it would not change the outcome of any of the votes. **Climate has been a central issue for all political forces so far. Beyond rhetoric, one can reasonably assume that these issues will not be set aside by the next Parliament either.**

**Considering that both governments and the EU Parliament compete in electing the future Commission, four scenarios have been developed for a more or less climate-friendly EU executive: Europe of the Conservatives, Continuity of the Green Deal, Climate Ambition, and the Europe of the Right:**

1. **Conservative Europe.** A coalition expressing a center-right commission. The main center-right political group, the European People's Party (EPP) could incorporate other conservative parties thus gain a stronger majority than the other parties and form a coalition with Socialists and Liberals from a majority position. This coalition would have an arguably more conservative personality than von der Leyen at the head of the Commission and would be less ambitious on climate than the previous one. This is partly [because of](#) the EPP, which is expressing positions that are more concerned with protecting traditional sectors and less of the innovation needed to achieve climate goals.
2. **Continuity of the Green Deal.** The same current center coalition (EPP, Socialists, Liberals) and von der Leyen as President of the European Commission for a second term. In this scenario, the Commission would continue the work it has undertaken, despite a

weakened majority compared to 2019 but could still count on the external support of the European Greens.

3. **Climate Ambition.** Composed of the political groups that always vote for climate, so EPP, Socialists, Liberals and Greens, which would express a larger majority than in previous scenarios. This coalition would be more ambitious in ensuring the implementation of climate goals and could continue to have von der Leyen as Commission President. However, the election campaign of the center-right parties started with strong criticism of the Green Deal. The feasibility therefore of strong grassroots support for the Green Deal as envisioned in 2019 appears unlikely at present.
4. **Europe of the Right.** While less likely, it is a right-wing-only majority coalition without the socialists but with the support of the liberals (thus EPP, Liberals, Right, Ultra-right). Such an alliance shows serious difficulties at the moment because of the heterogeneity of the parties that would compose it, not only on the climate issue but also in such essential issues as Europeanism, positioning with respect to the war in Ukraine and respect for the rule of law.

**Although there are political changes taking place with respect to the 2019 elections, these should not be such as to lead to an upheaval of current European climate policies, except in the case of a sharper-than-expected victory of right-wing parties and a political agreement, currently unlikely, to challenge the entire Green Deal framework. However, the most likely scenarios show a weakened Commission on climate and thus the risk of becoming less proactive in precisely the decisive years for limiting the impacts of climate change. As in 2019, the center-right family of EPP holds the keys to the political game. The outcome of the rise of the more conservative and skeptical right-wingers, represented by the parties of the Fratelli d'Italia (ECR) family, is unclear: will they opt for a Europe of conservatives, accepting coexistence with liberals and progressives and a continuity of the Green Deal (albeit weakened), or will they try to form a new coalition of right-wingers, now unlikely and in discontinuity with the Green Deal, which, however, risks falling right on climate?**

## 2. Introduction

With the new European legislature in 2024 comes a key moment for European climate policies in the critical decade to contain the effects of climate change and meet the commitments of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

These will be crucial years to operationalize the European Green Deal and ensure the economic security and social welfare that can result. **This first paper analyzes current political dynamics and hypothesizes the climate implications of possible changes in European institutions.** After a brief introduction on how European elections work, the possible composition of the European Council and the European Parliament in 2024 is analyzed. To explore how changes in institutions affect climate policies, the votes of both the member states in the Council and the European climate political groups in the last two years in the Parliament were analyzed. From this data, scenarios for the new European Commission were hypothesized and its ambition on climate was assessed.

### **The EU and the election of the European Parliament.**

European institutions are composed of both elements of representative democracy and intergovernmental bodies. The **European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, which is composed of the ministers of the member states, are referred to as co-legislators** and are responsible for amending and establishing European legislation that is proposed by the Commission. The **Commission is the body with the technical-executive power to initiate legislation**, whose Presidents and Commissioners are proposed by the Heads of State and Government (European Council) and elected by the European Parliament. **The European Council does not enter into the substance of EU legislation, but gives the political direction of the Union.**

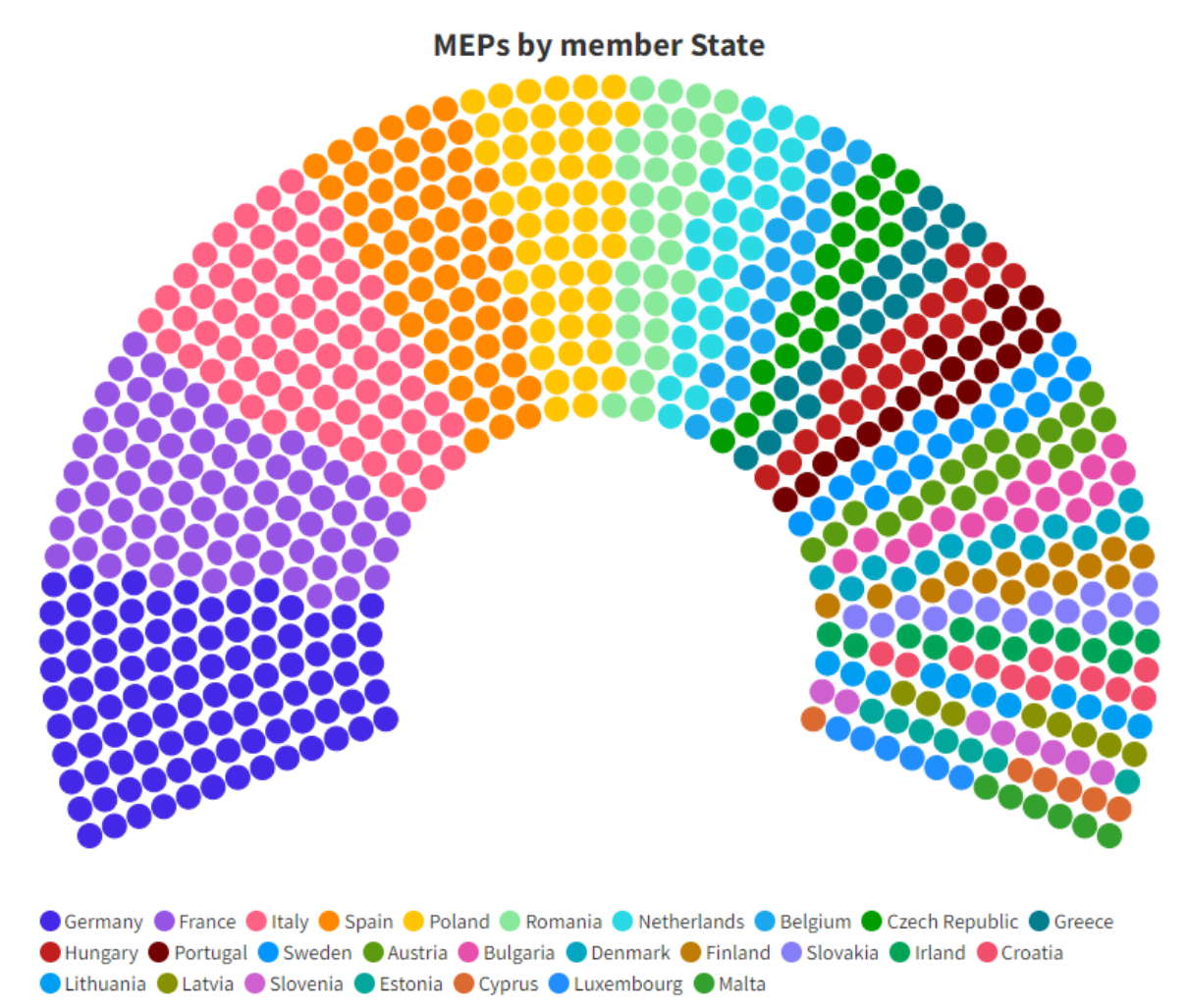
**The election of the European Parliament is linked to that of the President of the Commission, who is elected by parliamentary vote by an absolute majority on the proposal of the European Council.** Since there is no direct election of the President of the Commission, the European Council must take into account the results of the elections. The Heads of State and Government, by choosing a Commission that reflects parliamentary dynamics, can then ensure that there is a solid majority to support the Commission. Indeed, the European Parliament has the power to challenge the European Commission.

The European Parliament (EP) is renewed every five years through European elections by the citizens of the 27 EU member states. It is therefore the institution closest to the citizens and its positions on many legislations, including climate legislation, are often more ambitious than the other institutions. It is composed of 705 parliamentarians who are members of different European political parties.<sup>2</sup> Each member state is assigned a number of parliamentarians proportional to the number of inhabitants of

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<sup>2</sup> The European Parliament recently [proposed](#) increasing the number of MEPs to 716 and providing for a transnational list.

the country (for Italy there are 76). If we count the parliamentarians from Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland we already reaches the majority of votes in the European Parliament (362).



Each parliamentarian runs with a national party but in the EP is part of a European political group.<sup>3</sup> Those currently present are seven and correspond to the following Italian parties:

- **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR):** euro-critical conservative right: premier Giorgia Meloni currently chairs this group of which Fratelli d'Italia is a member
- **Identity and Democracy (ID):** radical right: one of its constituent parties is the League
- **European People's Party (EPP):** moderate center-right: Forza Italia is part of the largest group in the European Parliament

<sup>3</sup> The number of MEPs has not always been 705 but varies according to the number of member states.

- **Renew:** the family of center liberals: both Italia Viva and Azione find their place in this political family.
- **Socialists and Democrats (S&D):** center left, socialist group includes Democratic Party
- **Greens:** center left attentive to environmental issues: the Green and Left Alliance is part of it
- **The Left:** left, no Italian party belongs to this group
- **NI:** unaffiliated, here we find the 5 Star Movement here



### Box. 1 SPITZENKANDIDAT

In both the 2014 and 2019 elections, each European party nominated one or more leading candidates (Spitzenkandidat in German). This process was first applied in the 2014 European elections for the election of Jean Claude Juncker.<sup>4</sup> However, in the 2019 elections, the European Council opted to propose Ursula Von der Leyen as President of the European Commission over the Spitzenkandidats of the two largest parties in the European Parliament: Manfred Weber for the EPP and Frans Timmermans for S&D. Von der Leyen had in fact not been nominated by her party, the EPP, as Spitzenkandidat. There are [several factors](#) that led to her election, first and foremost a certain reticence on the part of the European Council toward this process and a lack of candidates that matched the expectations of the leaders.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, there was not the convergence in the European Parliament that would have been needed toward one of the candidates, and the center party (Renew) posed serious doubts about having Spitzenkandidats without real transnational lists. If Weber did not have enough support from the S&D and Renew parties and in the European Council from French President Macron, Timmermans aroused opposition from the Visegrad group countries. Faced with this political impasse, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron advocated for a compromise at the European Council that led EU leaders to converge on Von der Leyen.

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<sup>4</sup> While finding reference in the Maastricht Treaty [https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/E\\_230522\\_Partis-politiques-europeens\\_Brack-et-Wolfs\\_EN.pdf](https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/E_230522_Partis-politiques-europeens_Brack-et-Wolfs_EN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Commission president have usually always had experience in government

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Composition of the European Council in June 2024

Between June 2023 and June 2024, a number of elections are regularly scheduled in the 27 member countries that will be key to EU balances and the composition of the next Commission. Notably, the second round of elections in Greece recently [confirmed](#) the victory of PM Mitsotakis at the head of the center-right New Democracy party, prevailed over the leftist coalition led by Tsipras.

Elections are scheduled for July 23 in **Spain** where the majority led by PM Sanchez and composed of the left-wing parties (Socialists and Podemos) could be defeated by the center right. The Spanish center right according to [some observers](#) could ally with the right-wing Vox party to gain a more solid majority in parliament.

In **Poland**, on the other hand, elections will be held in the fall. The currently ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party led by Kaczyński is part of the conservative right-wing ECR in the European Parliament, challenging Donald Tusk whose party belongs to the European People's Party. Elections are also scheduled between September and October in **Slovakia**, where the center left is [projected](#) to win, and in **Luxembourg**. While in Slovakia the current government is composed of right-wing parties, Luxembourg is currently governed by a center-left coalition.

Lastly, elections in the **Netherlands** are scheduled for November 2023 due to the recent fall of Rutte's government. Polls foresee the rise of the Farmer Citizen Movement during the past months.

**Thus, considering the upcoming elections and their projections, the political weight of the European Council may shift more toward the center.**

<sup>6</sup> Specifically, in June 2024 there could be (compared to June 2023):

- 1 leftist government (-1)
- 8 center-left governments (+1)
- 5 center governments (+1)
- 7 center-right governments (-1)
- 5 right-wing governments (=)
- 1 far-right government<sup>7</sup> (=)

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<sup>6</sup> Should Donald Tusk's party prevail in Poland in the fall 2023 elections then a shift to the center would also occur on the right (8 center-right and 4 right-wing governments)

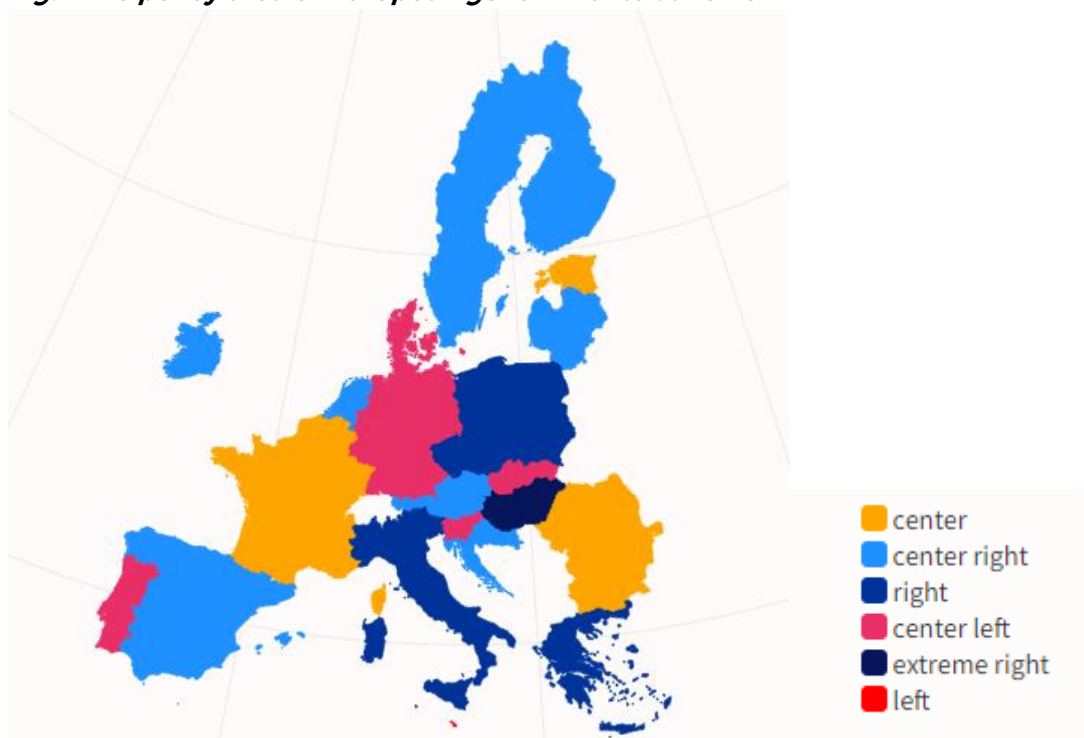
<sup>7</sup> Hungary has been qualified as a country with an extreme right-wing government, considering the lack of respect for the basic principles of the rule of law as defined by Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU).

**Table 1. Changes in the European Council.**

	2023	2024	
left	2	1	↓
center left	7	8	↗
center	4	5	↗
center-right	8	7	↓
right	5	5	=
far right	1	1	=
total	27	27	

**A moderate convergence toward the center of the political spectrum can be seen. Thus, the internal balances in the European Council would undergo only slight changes. However, there is no doubt that countries led by center-right or right-wing governments will retain a majority in the European Council. Furthermore, if the Netherlands elections were to favor right wing party (Farmer Citizen Movement) then we would see a moderate rise also of the right governments and a further decrease of the center right.**

**Fig.2 The policy area of European governments June 2024**

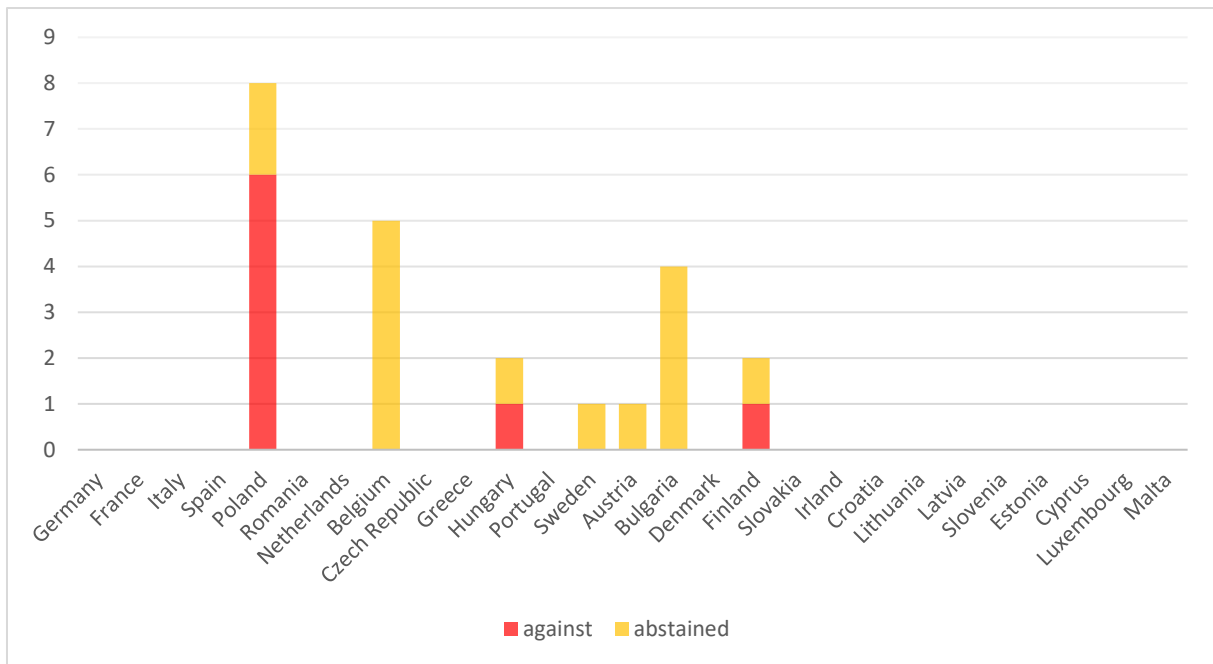


However, there is not necessarily a correlation between political affiliation and climate policies. **In many EU countries, climate is seen as a cross-cutting issue, as a development strategy, and as a result, climate goals tend to be ambitious regardless of the government in office.** To test whether there is a correlation between governments and climate votes, votes on climate issues in the Council of the European Union<sup>8</sup> over the past year on climate legislation (8 votes, see Annex), particularly on the Fit for 55 package and REPowerEU, were analyzed. **Out of 27 countries, 8 countries with right-wing governments, including Italy, consistently voted in favor of the climate package in formal votes.** Notable is the case of Poland, which voted against or abstained in all Fit for 55 votes; Belgium abstained 5 out of 8 times while Bulgaria in half of the voting occasions. Among the 8 countries that voted against or abstained at least once (which counts as a vote against), 5 have right-wing or center-right governments.

*Fig. 3 the climate votes in the Council of the European Union.*

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<sup>8</sup> The Council of the European Union is composed of the relevant ministers from each of the member states and therefore meets in different compositions depending on the subject matter; for example, energy or environment. The Council is together with the European Parliament co-legislator and thus contributes equally to the EP in setting and negotiating EU climate and energy legislation. It should be considered that only formal votes are public and consensus is often sought among member states. There is therefore intensive preliminary work at the level of the bodies that prepare ministerial meetings (called COREPER I and II) so that there are agreements among member countries and the decision-making mechanism is streamlined. When there is a need for a formal vote on energy and climate in the Council, a qualified majority vote of the relevant ministers is taken. Two types of majorities are needed in the case of formal votes: at least 55 percent of the member states (15 out of 27), but they must represent at least 65 percent of the Union's population. If a minority wants to block legislation it must consist of at least 4 member states. When voting by qualified majority, abstentions count as votes against.



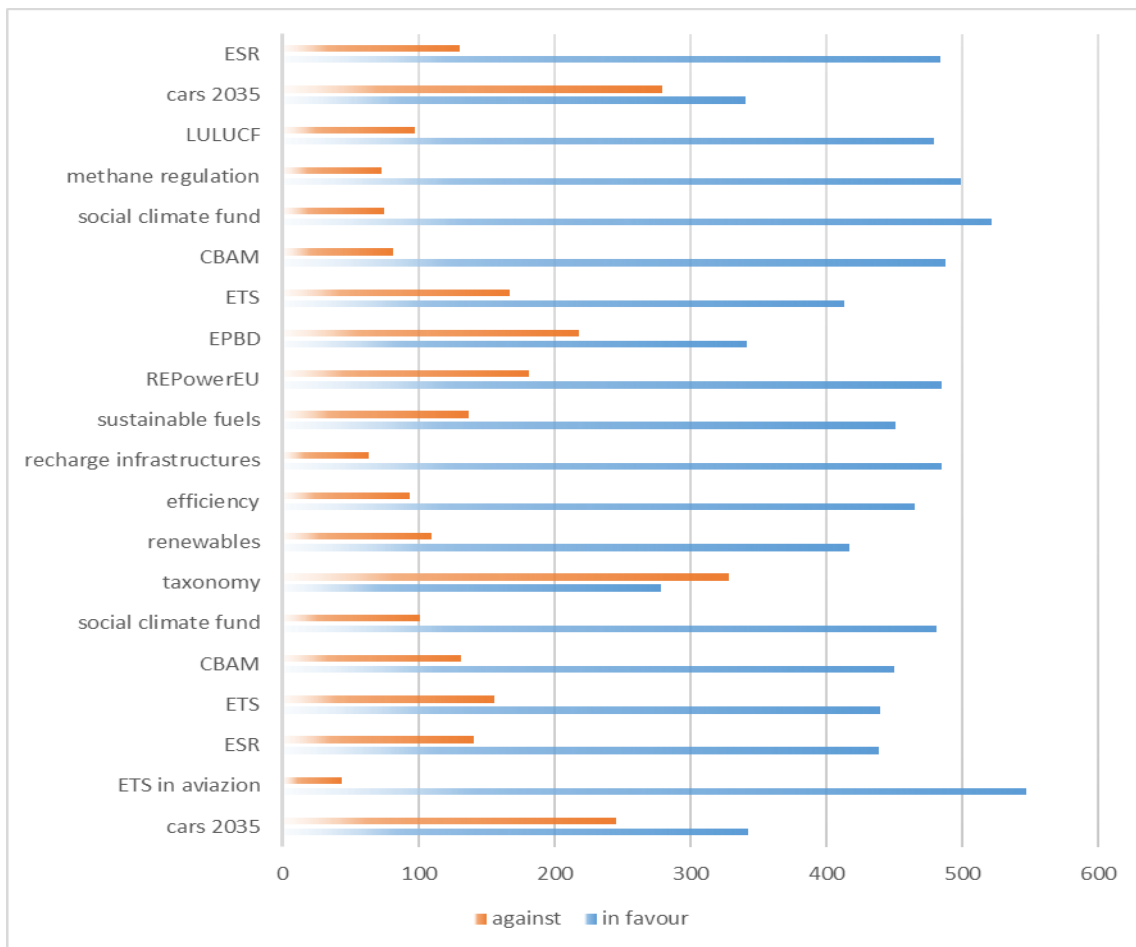
**While center-right-led governments are more likely to vote against ambitious climate policies than center or center-left governments, most right-wing-led governments in Europe have so far voted in favor of climate in the Council. Considering past dynamics, the possible shift toward the center of European governments would not in itself be an obstacle to electing a Commission president who would continue what has been done in terms of the European Green Deal in recent years.**

### **3.2 The composition of the European Parliament in June 2024**

Analyzing 20 European parties' climate votes during the past two years shows the extent to which European parties have expressed positions in favor of climate policies in line with the goal of reducing climate-changing emissions by 55 percent by 2030 compared to 1990.

Compared to 16 votes on the climate package Fit for 55 and REPowerEU, the majority of parliamentarians supporting climate legislation was always over 400 votes (always counting about 70 absentees) well above the majority threshold of 353 votes. In the case of the extension of the final vote on the Social Climate Fund and the extension of the ETS to the aviation sector, 520 votes in favor were exceeded. This majority consists of the moderate EPP, S&D and Renew parties with support from the Greens and often from The Left.

*Fig. 4 number of MEPs for and against climate legislation*



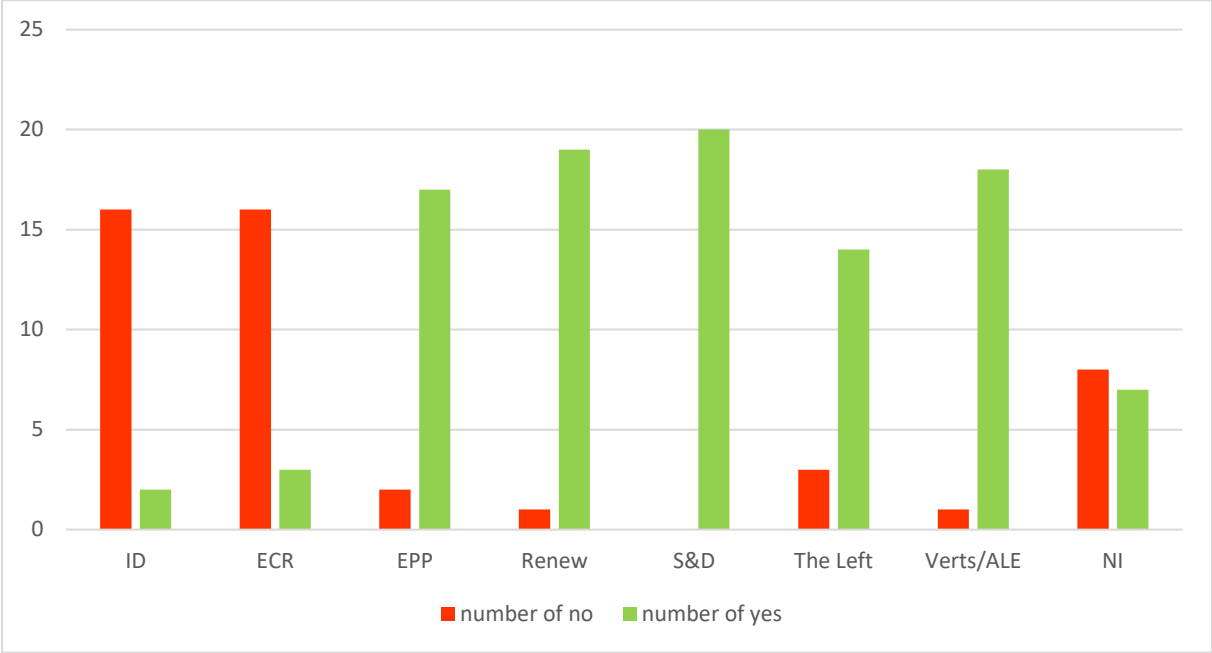
**The majority that supported the European Green Deal was very solid in the vast majority of votes (more than 400 votes), and was larger than the coalition that supported Von der Leyen's election in 2019 (383 votes in favor).**

At the level of parliamentary groups, the most pro-climate parties are the same parties that support the Von der Leyen Commission and voted for its election (with the exception of the Greens, who while not supporting Von der Leyen have always voted in favor of climate legislation). In this context, **the role and positioning of the European People's Party (EPP) will be crucial.** Traditionally, the EPP and the S&D Group have supported the European Commission together being both pro-European and moderate parties.

If we analyze the votes, we see that the more conservative right-wing **ECR and ID** parties of Fratelli d'Italia and Lega, respectively, almost always voted **against** the climate measures; they both voted against 16 times out of 20 and in favor 3 and 2 times, respectively. The **EPP, S&D, Renew, and the Greens** voted almost always in **favor**, with the EPP counting 2 votes against while Renew and the Greens 1 vote against. S&D always voted in favor. The Left, on the other hand, voted three times against and abstained three times,

deeming the proposal insufficiently ambitious. Finally, NI (unaffiliated) counts a heterogeneous positioning reflecting its composition: in fact, it includes extremely diverse parties such as Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán's Fidesz party and Conte's 5-Star Movement.

**Fig. 5 the climate votes of European political groups.**



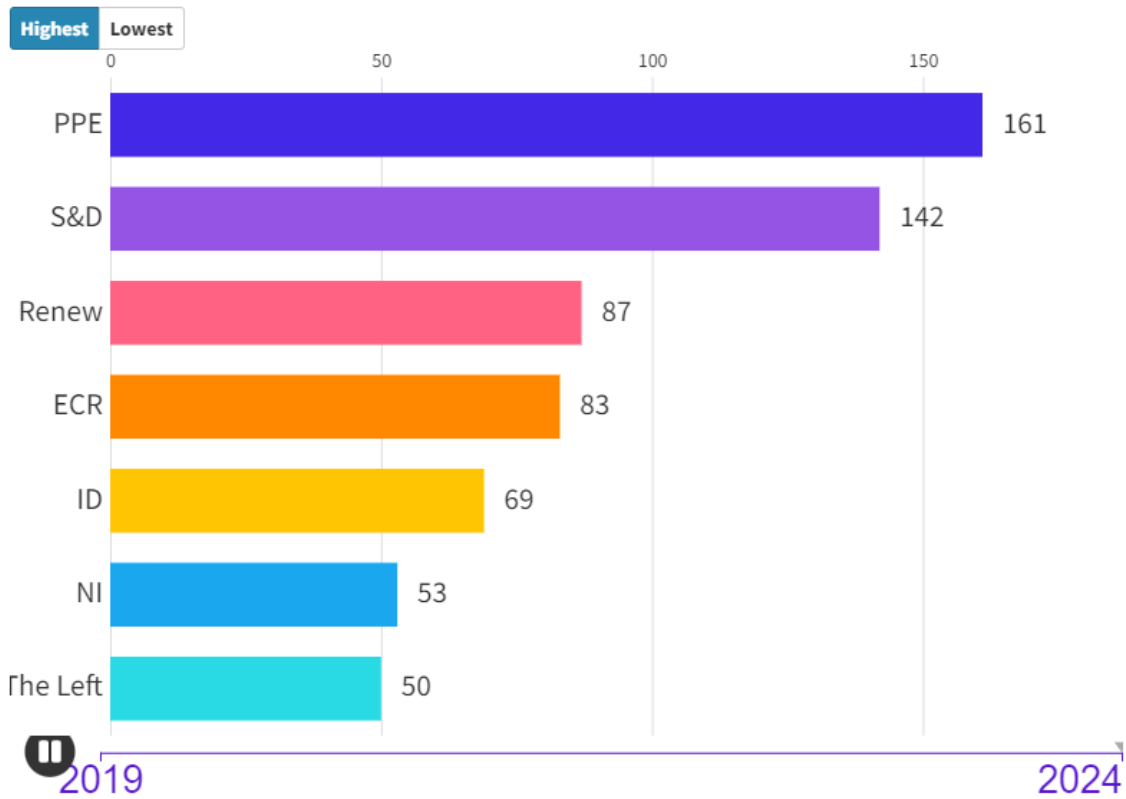
**Given the skeptical or sometimes climate-negationist stance of parties linked to the far-right ECR and ID groups, and their consistency in voting against EU climate legislation, an increase in the representation of these two groups in the EP could mean greater difficulty in ensuring that climate goals are met in the next European legislature.**

The most recent Europe Elects forecast prefigures (June 2023) that the European Parliament will consist of the following seats in 2024 (compared to 2019):<sup>9</sup>

- EPP 161 (-26)
- S&D 142 (-6)
- Renew 87 (-10)
- Greens 48 (-19)
- ECR 83 (+21)
- ID 69 (-7)
- The Left 50 (+8)

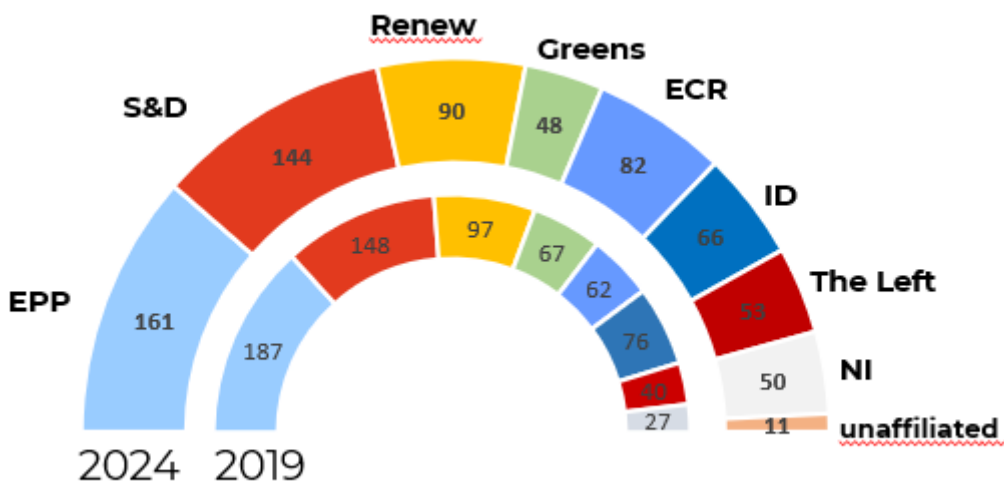
<sup>9</sup> EPP from 187 to 161, S&D from 148 to 142, Renew from 97 to 87, Greens from 67 to 48, ECR from 62 to 83, ID from 76 to 69, The left from 40 to 50, and NI from 27 to 53. Source Europe Elects

- NI 53 (+26)



The important fact is that the EPP is expected to remain the leading party and, as in 2019, will have to choose which of the other groups to form a coalition with.

**Fig. 6 hypothesis change in the weight of EU political parties 2019-2024**





Comparing the current projections with the results of the 2019 elections, and counting the [post-Brexit](#) changes then the exit of British MEPs, we can see that **all moderate parties lose votes (EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens)**. The parties with the biggest losses are the European People's Party and the Greens.

The ECR party of which Giorgia Meloni is president grows more than all other parties (+21) and comes close to Renew's level, which in previous elections constituted the third party after the two historically majority parties (EPP and S&D).

The far-right ID also loses seats (-7). In contrast, the leftist party The Left gains seats (+8).

**The European political groups projected to record the largest losses in June 2023 are the moderate center-right, of which Von der Leyen is a representative, and the European Greens; thus showing an emerging criticism of both the work of the Commission and the European Green Deal.**

### 3.3 The composition of the new Commission

Based on these projections, the EPP should therefore remain the leading party, as it was in the 2019, 2014 and 2009 elections. It will thus play the leading role in forming alliances for the future coalition and for the presidency of the Commission. The number of seats needed to have a majority in the European Parliament is 353. Thus, four scenarios have been outlined that are more or less favorable to climate policies:

- **Conservative Europe - center-right** coalition. If the EPP was able to incorporate other right-wing parties, currently in the ECR and ID groups, it could gain a more solid majority than the other parties and form a coalition between the parties with the most votes in the parliament namely S&D and Renew. These three parties would have a **390-vote** majority that could become even more solid if the EPP's consensus base is broadened by including other right-wing parties. Such a coalition could be led by a personality expressing a more conservative orientation than Von der Leyen especially with respect to climate issues. Manfred Weber, a German politician who already ran for EPP president of the European Commission in 2019, has been testing the possibility of such a coalition in recent months. The lower ambition on climate would be caused by a [change in](#) the EPP's [vision](#), which is expressing positions that are more focused on protecting traditional industry than on the innovation needed to compete in global markets and among global powers, the U.S. and China above all, that have chosen to focus heavily on climate policies.

- **Continuity of the Green Deal:** coalition of the **center**. The current Commission received support from the main EPP-S&D-Renew coalition parties in 2019 and could count on about half of the votes of the ECR group for a total of 463 votes. In this case, Von der Leyen could continue to chair the Commission, and **since there is no change in the composition of the EPP, the gap over the Socialists would be smaller**. This would imply some continuity with current balances that are often supported by external support from other political forces. For example, ECR [initially](#) gave [its support](#) to the Von der Leyen majority on specific issues such as the budget, opening the internal market to services, and finding a long-term solution to migration management. However, on climate, it hardly supported the Commission's proposals. On the contrary, the Greens, while not giving explicit support to this Commission, have always guaranteed outside support for the Green Deal when it came to voting on climate legislation. Considering the latest available projections, the Von der Leyen majority would now stand at around **431 votes** and would thus have more support than the first scenario. In this case, the Commission would continue the work already undertaken on the Green Deal although the majority would be less extensive than in 2019 (431 vs. 463).
- **Climate ambition: center-left** coalition. Counting the parties that always vote pro-climate so EPP, S&D, Renew and Greens would result in a larger majority than in previous scenarios of **438** MEPs. This majority would be even larger in 2019 (499 MEPs) if the Greens formally took part in it. This coalition might be possible if the center and center-right governments of member states favoring ambitious climate policies decided to support and further strengthen the European Green Deal. Given the climate policy views of [Weber](#) and Von der Leyen, this coalition could continue to have Von der Leyen as Commission President. However, the election campaign of the center-right parties has started with strong [criticism](#) of the Green Deal, particularly on the Green Industrial Plan and on some elements of the Fit for 55, such as the directive on the energy performance of buildings. The feasibility therefore of strong grassroots support for the Green Deal as envisioned in 2019 appears unlikely at present.

Finally, there is a scenario that we believe is politically unrealistic at the moment: a Europe of the right-wingers. As the polling analysis shows, the right-wing parties have very heterogeneous positions in climate votes. This would make it difficult to reach agreement, and this issue would probably be shelved. However, since climate is not the only issue of political

confrontation between these parties at the moment there are not the numbers to form a majority. In particular:

- 4. The Europe of the Right** would consist of Renew-EPP-ECR-ID. This majority would be around **400** MEPs. In this case, the future Commission, counting two very pro-climate parties and two against, would not be able to agree on climate, which would split the majority. **Such a majority would also have been possible in 2019 with 422 votes.** This coalition could be led by a personality expressing a strongly rightward-shifted direction. However, the role of Renew, a traditionally pro-climate party that has always voted in favor of all Fit for 55 legislation, should be considered. They should therefore not consider climate action an important part of the new Commission's agenda. Moreover, considering [Weber](#)'s recent statements, to support such a coalition the parties would have to share three key political ideas: being pro-European, ensuring support for Ukraine, and respecting the rule of law. This, according to Weber, would exclude Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement Nationale, the German Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, and the Polish Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS or in English Law and Justice) party. **If we excluded these three parties from this majority, the coalition would not have a majority of the votes in the European Parliament (351 out of the 353 needed). Equally this majority is not possible as a configuration of the right and far right without Renew (EPP+ID+ ECR = 313).**

Finally, **a scenario of a "Return of the Progressives" (S&D+Greens+The Left+ Renew) is currently unrealistic** both because of the lack of numbers to form a majority (327 vs. 353) and the resistance of Renew's liberal family to form a majority with the political groups further to the left. **Likewise, a right-wing scenario without ID's more radical right (EPP + ECR + Renew) would not have a majority (331)**

**Conclusion: as in 2019, the center-right family of Populars holds the keys to the political game in the new Commission. What has changed is that through the "Meloni effect" now the ECR right, which is more conservative but also skeptical of Green Deal policies, is growing strongly and more credible as a governing force than in 2019. The outcome of this development, however, is unclear: will ECR and Meloni opt to support a Conservative Europe, while accepting coexistence with liberals and progressives and some continuity of the Green Deal (albeit weakened), or will they try to form a new coalition of the right-wing, now unlikely and in discontinuity with the Green Deal, which, however, risks falling right on climate?**



## Annex 1: CASE STUDIES.

### Green houses, taxonomy and cars 2035

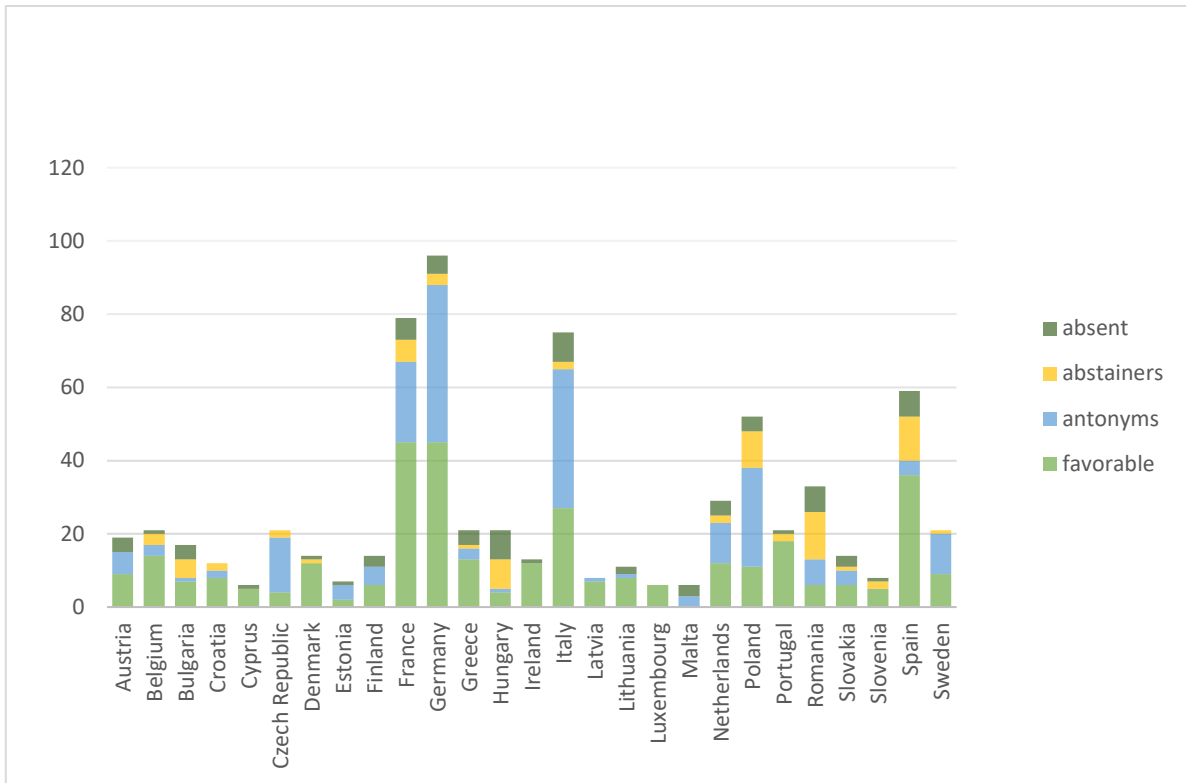
The most contested dossiers of the Fit for 55 climate package were two. The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), renamed "Green Homes" in Italy, and the vote on Regulation 2019/ 631, which would ban the sale of cars with internal combustion engines from 2035. Another very important vote, on which there was intense campaigning by civil society, was on the second act delegated to the European taxonomy; the EU sustainable business classification system.

### Green Homes - favorable but not too much

On March 14, 2023, an amendment to the Commission's proposal on the energy performance of buildings was voted on in Parliament to establish the parliamentary position for negotiations between the EU institutions that would lead to the final text. The vote was characterized by a break in the majority that supported almost all other climate legislation. In particular, the majority of right-wing and center-right parties (ID; ECR, EPP + the majority of unaffiliated NI) voted against the Commission's proposal. A number of amendments aimed at weakening the directive and in particular one aimed at its complete rejection (am. 10) were tabled by some right-wing parliamentarians, including some Italians. This amendment was not adopted, however, and the Parliament proposal passed with 341 votes in favor, 218 against and 78 abstentions.

It can be seen from the vote that the majority did not include 50 percent plus one of the European Parliament (353). Instead, a majority of center and left-wing parties (S&D, Renew, Greens, The Left) voted in favor. It is interesting to point out that in this vote the European People's Party was actually divided between those against, in favor and abstaining, 59, 49 and 49 respectively. **This dynamic signals contrasts within the European center-right in support for the Commission's proposals.**

By analyzing the possibility that EU Parliament votes can also take place according to national dynamics, we can also see that parliamentarians from 12 out of 27 countries voted compactly following national rather than party interests. We can also see that Germany is very divided on this issue. Of the 12 countries that voted following national interests, almost all are in favor.



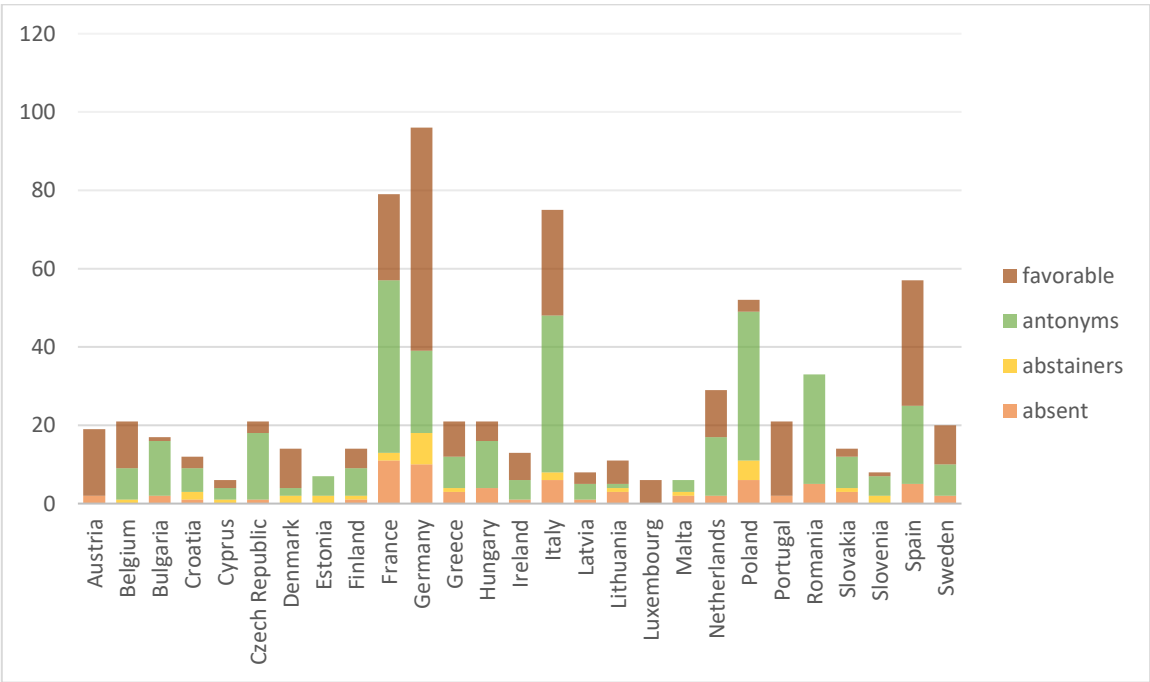
**If a vote was taken today, one year after the EU elections, it can be seen that the directive would still be approved even though the majority in favor of the directive would be reduced by about 20 votes (318).**

### **Taxonomy - neither full support for Von der Leyen nor climate**

The vote in summer 2022 on the second act delegated of the taxonomy, while not closely related to the Fit for 55 climate package, is a relevant vote in that it is indicative of both parliamentary support for the Von der Leyen Commission and how national and political affiliation interests can trump ambitious climate action.

The EU Parliament at that time was called to vote on the delegated act on the taxonomy, which included the possibility of classifying nuclear and gas as sustainable under certain conditions. The Parliament voted to keep it in place with a majority of 328 votes while 278 MEPs would have preferred to reject the measure in question; 30 abstained. The majority of members equal to 353 MEPs was not reached. This shows both that the Europarlament was not giving full support to a measure strongly advocated by the Commission without consulting the Parliament, and that the majority of MEPs present did not consider the introduction of exceptions to considering a fossil fuel as sustainable to be dangerous or misleading.

Looking at the voting behavior of the European parties, it can be seen that the majority of members from the right, center and center parties voted to maintain the delegated act and thus to consider certain natural gas production as sustainable (ID, ECR, EPP, Renew, NI). In contrast, the majority of MEPs from center-left/left parties (S&D, Greens, The Left) voted united against the measure. In this case, we do not see a division within any of the European parties. Analyzing the vote by nation to understand how national interests influenced the decision, we see how this dynamic can be traced in 9 out of 27 member states that are almost equally divided between those in favor and those against.



**If a vote were taken today, the majority in favor of the delegated act would be strengthened by less than a dozen votes (335) and would not change the outcome of the vote.**

**Cars regulation 2035 - for climate we need Renew**

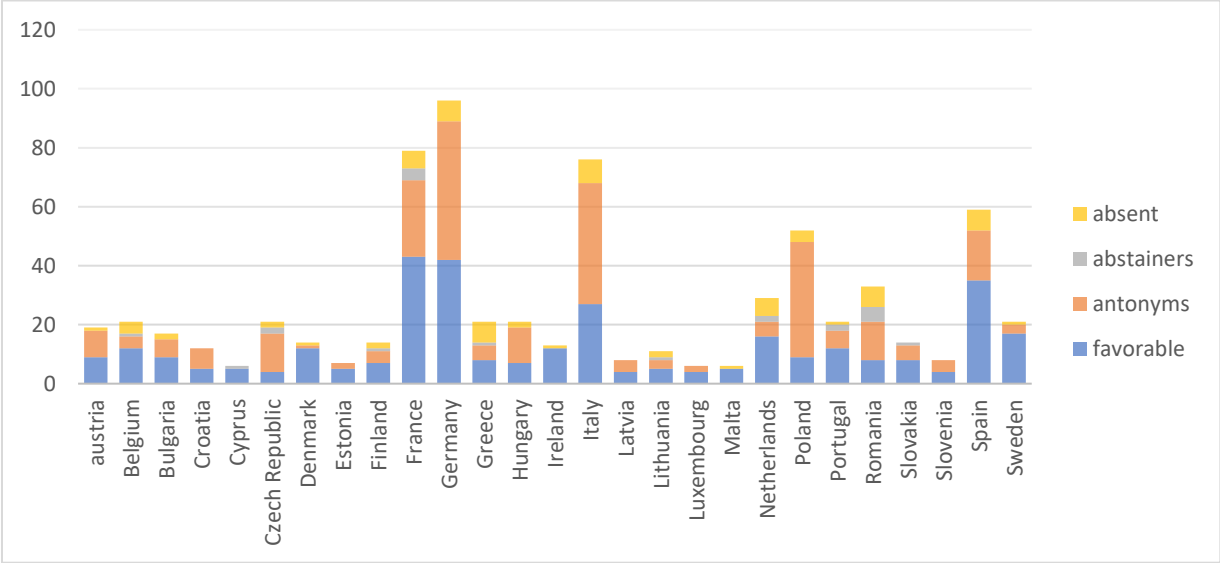
Regarding Regulation 2019/631, which provides for a ban on the sale of cars with an internal combustion engine to 2035, there were two relevant votes in the European Parliament. The first in June 2022 when the position of the European Parliament was voted on, and the second in March 2023 when the final agreement reached by the three EU institutions-the Council, Commission, and European Parliament-was voted on.

In the first vote it can be seen how, although no majority threshold was needed, the votes in favor of the measure were a dozen less than the 50

percent plus one majority of MEPs (342). In this case, even more than in the vote on the EPBD, the EPP did not vote together with the others supporting the Commission (Renew and S&D), but voted against the measure (31 in favor and 112 against). The EPP thus voted along with the right-wing ECR and ID parties. In contrast, both the Greens and the majority of The Left supported the measure and voted for it. Their votes added to those of some EPP members allowed the parliamentary proposals to reach interinstitutional negotiation. In the second vote almost a year later, the same dynamic could be observed: the parties furthest to the right (EPP, ECR, ID and most of NI) voted against while those furthest to the center and left voted in favor; resulting in the approval of the agreement by 340 votes. **If the same votes occurred taking into account the projections we currently have available, the regulation would still be approved although with a slightly smaller majority (321 first vote and 316 second vote).**

**It is clear from this vote that for climate measures, the role of Renew, that is, the European center parties, is still crucial.**

Finally, analyzing the national dynamics, it can be seen that even the vote on this regulation, in 7 member states voted mainly following national dynamics.





## Annex 2- Methodology

This study makes use of both a quantitative part of vote analysis and more qualitative modes of research related to the study of EU politics and political balances between institutions. The Europe Elects, Politico Polls, and EU Matrix sites were consulted to compare election projections for member states. For the analysis of votes in the Council, the votes published in the Council of the European Union website were analyzed in particular the votes on: Effort Sharing regulation 29.03.2023, Regulation 2019/631 on cars 29.03.2023, REPowerEU, Emission Trading System, Social climate fund and Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism 25.04.2023, Emission trading system in aviation, LULUCF were considered.

Instead, for the analysis of votes in the European Parliament, data published on the Parliament website after each vote were collected. The European Parliament votes analyzed are as follows: Regulation 2019/631 on cars 8.06.2022, ETS in aviation 8.06.2022; Effort Sharing Regulation 8.06.2022; ETS Regulation 22.06.2022; Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) 22.06.2022; Climate Social Fund 22.06.2022; second delegated act on taxonomy 6.07.2022; Renewables Directive 14.09.2022; Energy Efficiency Directive 14.09.2022; Electric charging infrastructure 19.10.2022; sustainable fuels in navigation 19.10.2022; REPowerEU renewable permits 14.12.2022; Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 14.03.2023; final vote on ETS reform, introduction of CBAM and Climate Social Fund 18.04.2023; Methane Emissions Regulation 9.05.2023; final vote on Effort Sharing Regulation; final vote on LULUCF regulation.



THE ITALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE THINK TANK

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