



THE ITALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE THINK TANK

# EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024: POLITICAL SCENARIOS. What's the outlook for the upcoming 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. Over the past five years, Von der Leyen Commission has proposed and built the policy framework for achieving climate neutrality by 2050. Will next Commission and European Parliament continue on this path, ensuring that the 2030 targets needed to avert the most dangerous effects of climate change are met? Most importantly, will they be able to make the energy transition sustainable from a socio-economic perspective?

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 political scenarios based on projections available as of November 2023, reflecting also the dynamics between political groups and Member States. For this analysis, we considered changes in both institutions representing Member States (the European Council and the Council of the European Union) and in the European Parliament, which is directly elected by citizens.

**From the analysis of the composition of the European Council, we can observe a considerable difference with the political equilibrium of 2019. However, the internal political balance is not expected to change much over the next months. Undoubtedly, countries led by centre-right or right-wing governments will retain a majority in the European Council as it was in mid-2023.**

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 framed as a development opportunity and as a result climate goals are supported regardless of the ruling party or coalition. To check for possible correlations, we analysed a number of Council's voting on energy and climate issues over the past year.<sup>1</sup> While centre-right-led Governments are more likely to vote against climate policies than centre or centre-left governments, most conservative European governments often voted in favour of climate.

**Considering past dynamics, the composition of the European Council would not in itself be an obstacle to electing a Commission President who continues the work done in recent years in terms of the European Green Deal, but it could reduce the ambition of next Commission President on climate.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Council of the EU is composed of the ministers of each Member Country responsible, for example, for climate and energy

In the European Parliament, we can expect a similar situation 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 Euro-sceptic conservative right-wing political groups, could reduce climate ambitions. The analysis of voting on climate legislation over the past year shows **a strong diversity of thinking on climate among the European right-wing parties**. The European political groups expected to face the largest losses are the European Greens, and the moderate centre-right, to which Von der Leyen belongs. This shows emerging doubts over the work of the Commission and the Green Deal.

Within the current European Parliament and in the vast majority of votes, the majority that supported EU climate policies was very solid. However, looking at specific measures such as the vote on regulation 631 on CO2 standards for cars, and on EPBD directive we can observe that the majority would be narrow now compared to when the votes were casted.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the majority in favour of the inclusion of fossil gas in the EU taxonomy would be stronger now than in 2022. **It emerges that the vote on CO2 standards for cars would not pass with the current projections even if by just four votes. While we can assume that climate will not be set aside by the next Parliament but we highlight that the balance is sliding towards climate sceptical narratives. This will likely have an impact on the EU's economy since some sectors are already disadvantaged compared to other global powers.**

**Considering that both Governments and the EU Parliament compete in electing the future Commission, four scenarios have been developed:**

1. **A Conservative Europe.** The outcome is a coalition expressing a centre-right Commission. The main centre-right political group, the European People's Party (EPP) could obtain the support of other conservative parties thus gaining a stronger majority than other groups and forming a coalition with the Socialists and the Liberals. This coalition could choose a more conservative leader 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 shifting its position towards protecting traditional sectors and away from the innovation needed to achieve climate goals.

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<sup>2</sup> If in 2022 the Regulation 631 on CO2 standards for cars was approved with a margin of 97 votes between the MEPs in favour and those against now it would be approved with an edge of 37 votes. Similarly the first vote on the EPBD passed with a 123 votes' difference while now it would be approved by 60 votes. On the contrary the majority in favour of the inclusion of fossil gas in the EU taxonomy would be stronger than in 2022 (101 vs 50 votes).

2. **The Continuity of the Green Deal.** This is the same Grandcoalition as today (EPP, Socialists, Liberals) which would support 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. **Europe of the Right.** It is a right-wing-only majority coalition without the Socialists but with the support of the liberals (EPP, Liberals, Right, Ultra-right). Such an alliance shows some difficulties because of the diversity of parties' position not only on climate but also on fundamental issues such as European integration, the war in Ukraine, migration and the respect of the rule of law. Nevertheless, this coalition would reach the majority of MEPs even excluding the most radical far right parties (Rassemblement Nationale, Alternative fur Deutschland and PiS)
4. **Climate Ambition.** This outcome is made up by the political groups that have always voted for climate: EPP, Socialists, Liberals and Greens. They would enjoy a larger voting majority than in other scenarios and would be more ambitious in ensuring the implementation of climate goals. They could give a second mandate to Von der Leyen as Commission President. However, the election campaign of centre-right parties has started with strong criticism of the Green Deal. The political feasibility of such scenario appears therefore low at the moment.

**Although there are political shifts underway especially in the narrative of centre-right and right-wing political forces – the more so in comparison to the 2019 elections – these should not be such as to lead to an upheaval of current European climate policies. This is with the exception of a win of right-wing parties and a political agreement for rewiring the entire Green Deal framework. However, the most likely scenarios show a weakened Commission on climate and thus the risk of becoming less proactive during precisely the critical decade for limiting the impacts of climate change.**

**Like in 2019, the centre-right family of the EPP holds the keys to the political outcome. The rise of more conservative and sceptical right-wing parties, such as Brothers of Italy represented by the ECR family in the European Parliament, is unclear: will they opt for a conservative Europe, thus accepting the co-existence with liberal and progressive forces and effectively a continuity of the Green Deal (albeit weakened), or will they try to form a new coalition of right-wing parties, in discontinuity with the Green Deal, which risks however falling short of the votes to form a**

**majority also because of different views on climate policy? In this game there is a player who seems to win in every scenario, the Italian PM.**

**In the first case Brothers of Italy could increase its legitimacy at the EU level and be fully recognised among the parties that will elect the new Commission. In the second one, if the far right “coalition” prevails, they would be at the centre of EU politics being closer to those parliamentary groups due to their history and political culture.**

## 2. Introduction

With the new European legislature of 2024, a crucial moment opens up for European climate policies in the critical decade to contain the effects of climate change and uphold the commitments of the 2015 Paris Agreement. These will be crucial years for making the European Green Deal operational and ensuring the economic security and social well-being that can result from it. This work analyses the current political dynamics and hypothesizes the implications for the climate 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 examined. To delve into how changes in institutions can impact climate policies, the votes of both the member states in the Council and European political groups on climate issues over the past two years in Parliament have been analysed. Based on this data, scenarios for the new European Commission have been hypothesized, and its ambition regarding climate has been assessed.

### **The EU and the European Parliament Election**

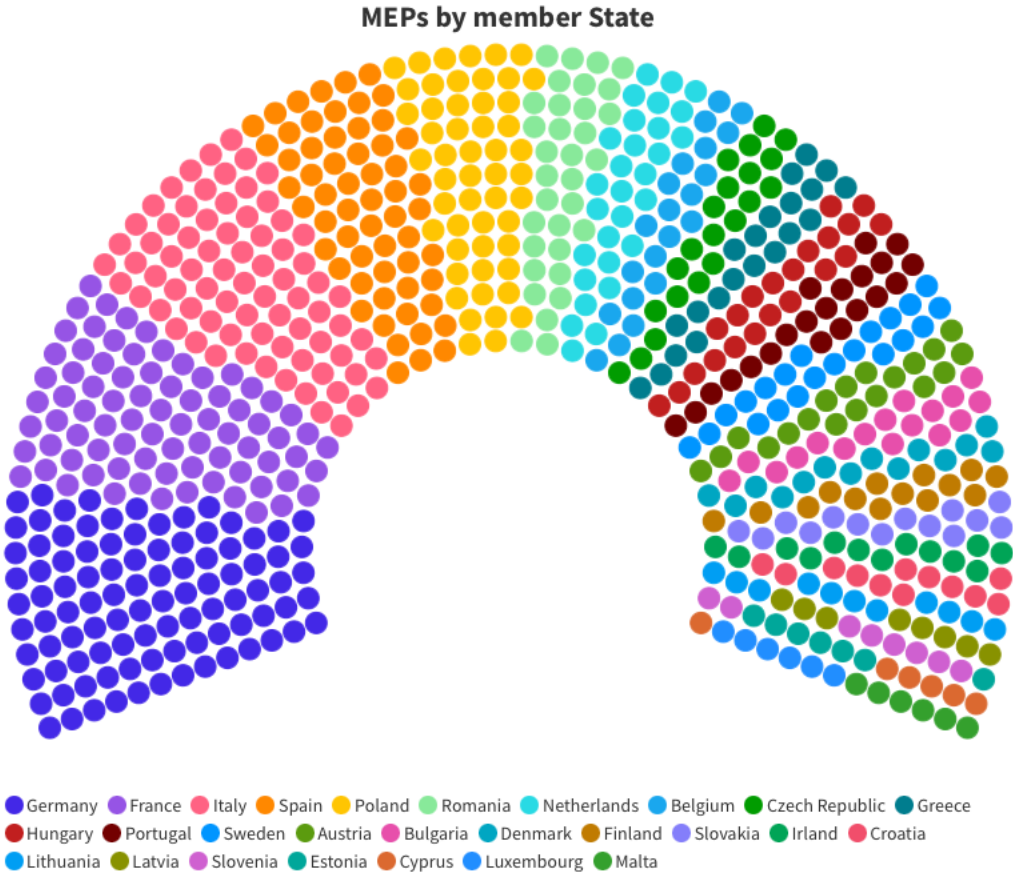
European institutions are composed of elements of both representative democracy and intergovernmental bodies. The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, composed of Ministers from member states, are defined as co-legislators and are responsible for amending and defining European legislation proposed by the Commission. The Commission is the body with technical-executive power of legislative initiative, whose President and Commissioners are proposed by the Heads of State and Government (European Council) and elected by the European Parliament. The European Council does not delve into the details of EU legislation but provides the political direction for the Union.

**The election of the European Parliament is linked to that of the President of the Commission, who is elected by parliamentary vote with 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 election results. Heads of State and Government,

by choosing a Commission that reflects parliamentary dynamics, can then ensure that there is a solid majority in support of the Commission. In fact, the European Parliament has the power to vote down 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-related ones, are often more ambitious than other institutions. It consists of 705 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who belong to various European political parties. Recently, it has been decided that the number of MEPs will increase to 720.

Each member state is allocated a number of MEPs proportional to the country's population (Italy, for example, has 76 MEPs). When you count the MEPs from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Poland, you already reach the majority of votes in the European Parliament.



Each parliamentarian runs for election with a national party, but within the European Parliament, they belong to a European political group.<sup>3</sup> Currently, there are seven such groups, and they correspond to the following Italian parties:

- **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR):** This group represents the euro- skeptic conservative right, and it is currently chaired by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who represents Fratelli d'Italia.
- **Identity and Democracy (ID):** This group represents the radical right and includes parties such as the League.
- **European People's Party (EPP):** This is a moderate centre-right group, and Forza Italia is part of the largest group in the European Parliament
- **Renew:** The centrist liberal family, and both Italia Viva and Azione are aligned with this political family.
- **Socialists and Democrats (S&D):** Centre-left, the socialist group includes the Democratic Party.
- **Greens:** Environmentally focused group
- **The Left:** Left-wing, with no Italian parties in this group.
- **NI:** Non-affiliated, the Five Star Movement is located here.

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<sup>3</sup> The number of European Parliament members has not always been 705 but varies depending on the number of member states.



### **Box. 1 SPITZENKANDIDAT [LEADING CANDIDATE]**

Both in the 2014 and 2019 elections, every European party nominated one or more lead candidates (Spitzenkandidat in German). This process was first applied during the 2014 European elections for the election of Jean Claude Juncker.<sup>4</sup> However, in the 2019 elections, the European Council chose to propose Ursula Von der Leyen as President of the European Commission, rather than the Spitzenkandidat from the two largest parties in the European Parliament: Manfred Weber for the EPP and Frans Timmermans for the S&D. Von der Leyen had not been nominated as the Spitzenkandidat by her party, the EPP. Several factors led to her election, including a certain reluctance on the part of the European Council towards this process and a lack of candidates that met the leaders' expectations.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, in the European Parliament, there was no convergence towards one of the candidates, which would have been necessary, and the centrist party (Renew) had serious doubts about having Spitzenkandidat without genuine transnational lists. If Weber did not have enough support from the S&D and Renew parties, and Timmermans faced opposition from the Visegrad Group countries during the European Council under President French Macron. Faced with this political impasse, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron proposed themselves as advocates for a compromise in the European Council, which led EU leaders to converge on Von der Leyen.

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<sup>4</sup> While there is a 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> Presidents of the Commission have typically had prior government experience

## 3. Results

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

Between June 2023 and June 2024, several key elections are regularly scheduled in the 27 member states, which are having a significant impact on the EU's balance and the composition of the upcoming Commission. Here the latest updates in terms of recent elections.

- In **Spain**, after months of negotiations in the Parliament, the former prime minister Pedro Sanchez, obtained a second term thanks to the support of some minor parties.
- Meanwhile in **Portugal**, prime minister Costa was involved in a scandal which led to his resignation. New elections are foreseen in March 2024.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> of October national elections were held in **Poland**, where the coalition chaired by Donald Tusk obtained the parliamentary majority needed to form a government.
- The 22<sup>nd</sup> of November the **Dutch** voted to renew the parliament. The Freedom Party (PVV), an extreme right party lead by Geert Wilders positioned itself as first political party in terms of votes. During the next weeks, a coalition deal could be reached to include PVV or to make a deal between other four parties to form a centre government.
- Finally, in the same days of the EU's elections (9 June 2024), national elections are planned in **Belgium**.

**Considering these upcoming elections and their projections, countries led by centre-right or right-wing governments will retain the majority. However, it is possible to observe substantial changes in the European Council composition compared to 2019.** Specifically, in June 2024, compared to October 2023, there could be the following changes in the European Council:

- 2 left-wing governments (=)
- 7 centre-left governments (=)
- 0 green governments (-1)
- 4 centre governments (- 3)
- 10 centre-right governments (+2)
- 3 right-wing governments (+2)
- 1 far-right government<sup>6</sup> (=)

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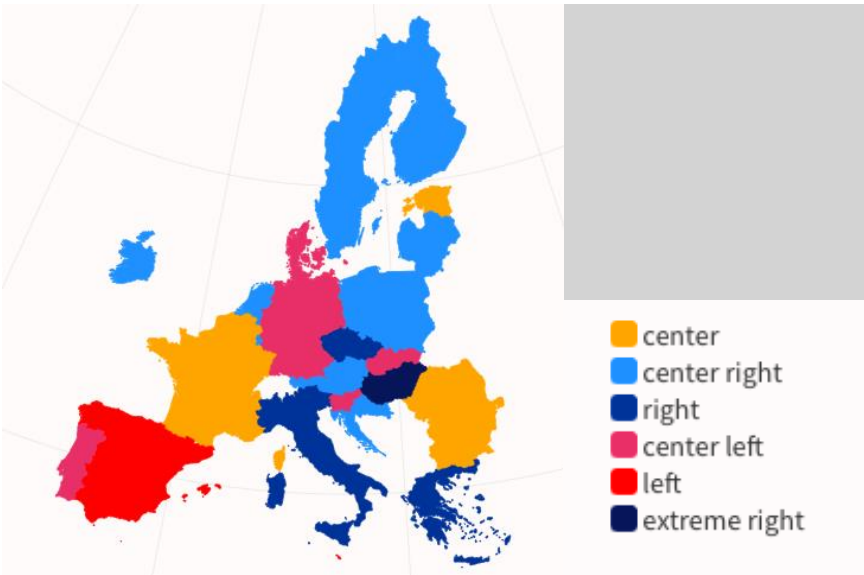
<sup>6</sup> Hungary has been classified as a country with an far-right government, considering its disregard for the basic principles of the rule of law as defined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

If we compare the current EU Council with the one of 2019, we can notice how the majority at the time was made of centre, centre-left parties, as the following table shows:

**Table 2. The European Council changes between 2019 and 2024**

	2019	2024	
left	2	2	=
center left	7	6	↓
greens	1	0	↓
center	7	3	↓
center right	8	9	↑
right	1	4	↑
far right	1	1	=
upcoming elections		2	
total	27	27	

**Fig.2 The Political Spectrum of European Governments – June 2024**

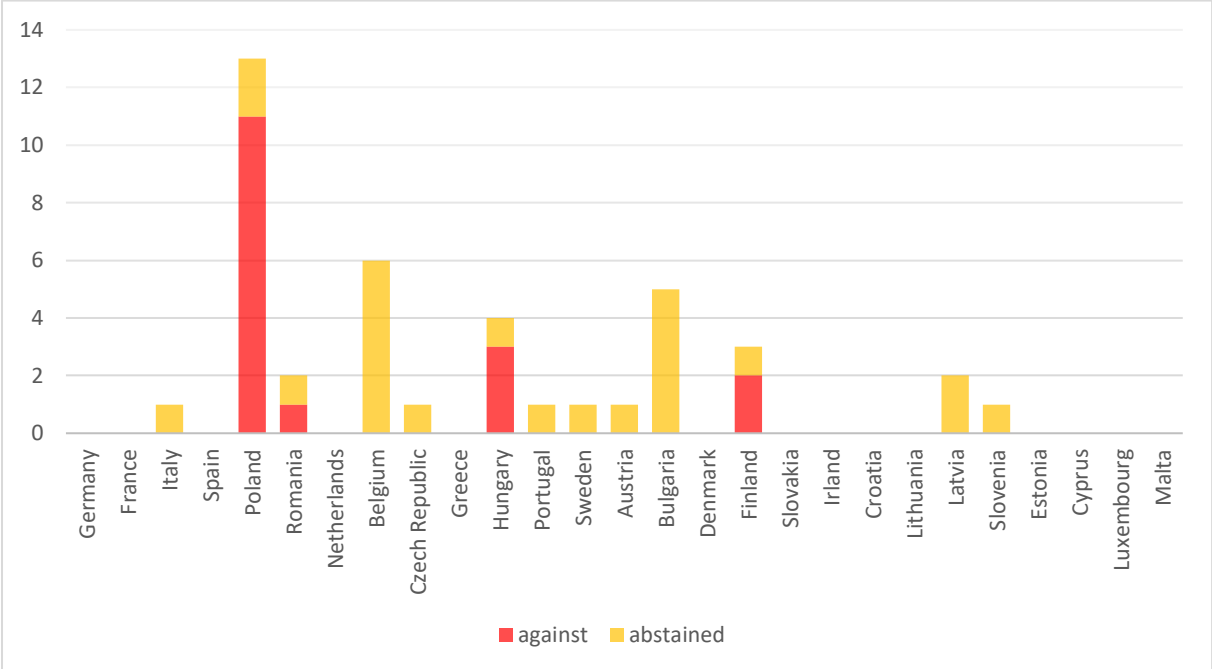


It can be observed that in 2024 fewer countries are going to be led by centrist government and no green party will be leader of a coalition, while centre-right and right parties will retain the majority.

However, there is not necessarily a correlation between political affiliation and climate policies. **In many EU countries, climate is viewed as a cross-cutting issue, as a development strategy, and consequently, climate goals tend to be ambitious regardless of the governing party.** To assess

whether there is a correlation between governments and votes on climate, votes on climate-related issues in the Council of the European Union<sup>7</sup> over the past year on climate legislation (13 votes, see Annex) have been analysed, particularly on the Fit for 55 package and REPowerEU. **Out of 14 countries with right-wing governments, 5 countries have consistently voted in favour of the climate package in formal votes. Conversely, out of 13 countries with centre or centre-left government, 9 have always voted in favour of climate.** The case of Poland stands out, which voted against or abstained in all Fit for 55 votes; Belgium abstained 6 times out of 13, while Bulgaria did so in 5 voting occasions. Among the 13 countries that at least once have voted against or abstained (which counts as a negative vote), 9 have centre-right or right-wing governments.

**Fig. 3 Climate Votes in the Council of the European Union on the Fit for 55**



<sup>7</sup> The Council of the European Union is composed of ministers responsible for specific policy areas in each of the member states. Therefore, it meets in different configurations depending on the topic being discussed, such as energy or the environment. The Council, along with the European Parliament, is a co-legislator and contributes equally to defining and negotiating EU regulations on climate and energy. It should be noted that only formal votes are public, and there is often a search for consensus among member states. There is, therefore, intensive preliminary work at the level of bodies preparing ministerial meetings (known as COREPER I and II) to reach agreements among member countries and streamline the decision-making process.

In the Council, when a formal vote on energy and climate matters is required, it is done by a qualified majority vote of the competent ministers. In the case of formal votes, two types of majorities are needed:

At least 55% of the member states (15 out of 27), which must represent at least 65% of the European 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 are counted as votes against the proposal.

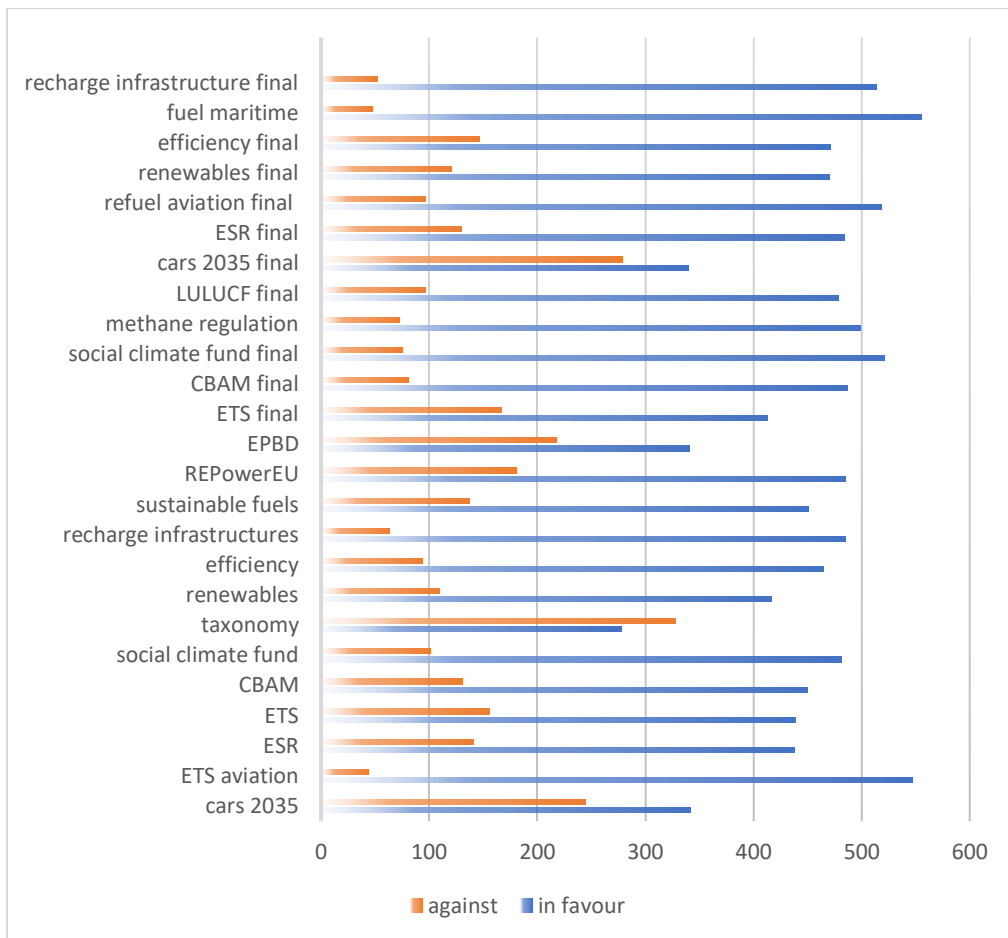
**If it is more likely for centre-right-led governments to vote against ambitious climate policies compared to centre or centre-left governments, one third of right-wing-led governments in Europe have so far voted always in favour of climate measures in the Council. Considering past dynamics, the future composition of the European Council would not in itself pose an obstacle to the election of a Commission President who continues the work done in recent years in terms of the European Green Deal, but it could reduce considerably the ambition of next Commission President on climate.**

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

By analysing 25 climate-related votes of European parties over the past two years, we can understand to what extent these parties have expressed positions in favour of climate policies aligned with the goal of reducing climate-altering emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990.

In 25 votes on the Fit for 55 and REPowerEU climate package, the majority of parliamentarians who supported climate legislations consistently exceeded 400 votes (with around 70 absences) well above the majority threshold of 353 votes. In the case of extending the final vote on the Climate Social Fund and extending the ETS to the aviation sector, over 520 favourable votes were obtained. This majority is composed of moderate parties from the EPP, S&D, and Renew with the support of the Greens and often The Left.

**Fig. 4 Number of MEPs in Favour or Against Climate Legislations**



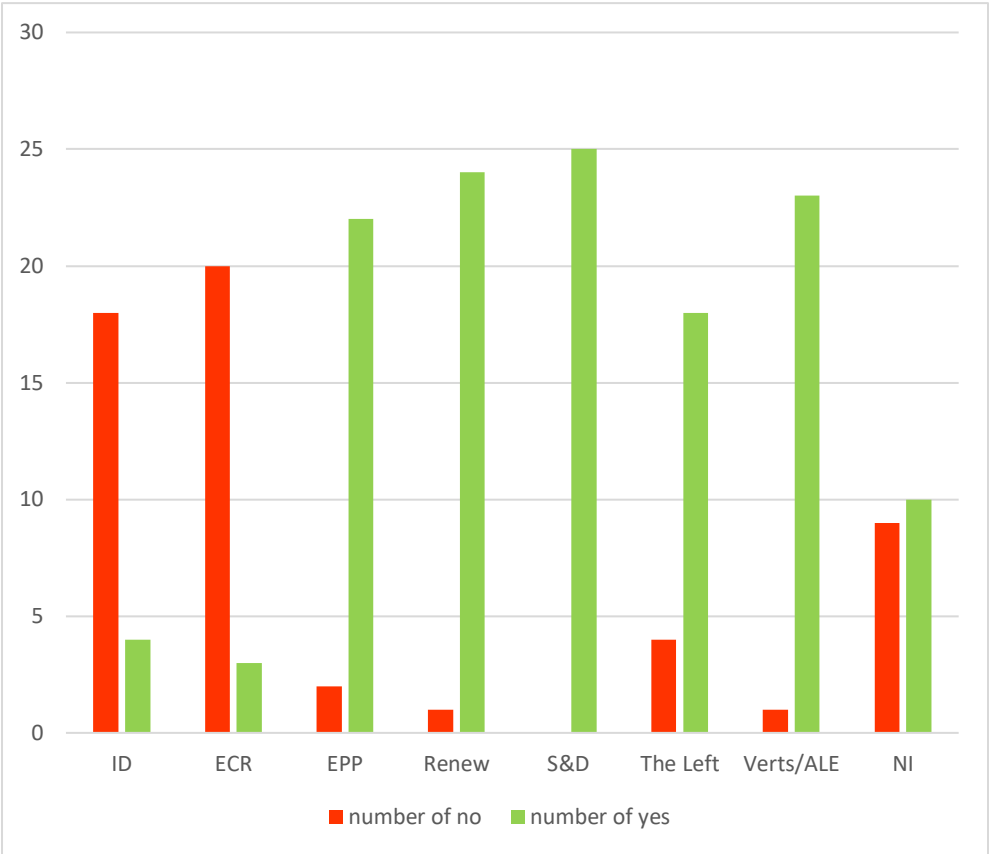
**The majority supporting the European Green Deal has been very strong in the vast majority of votes (more than 400 votes) and has been larger than the coalition that supported Von der Leyen's election in 2019 (383 favourable votes).**

At the level of parliamentary groups, the parties most favourable to climate action are the same ones that support the Von der Leyen Commission and voted for her election (with the exception of the Greens who, while not supporting Von der Leyen, have consistently voted in favour of climate legislations). 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 together supported the European Commission as both are pro-European and moderate parties.

If we analyse the votes, we see that the more conservative right-wing parties in the **ECR and ID** groups, represented by Fratelli d'Italia and Lega respectively, have often voted **against** climate measures; ECR voted against 20 out of 25 times while ID 18. They voted in favour 3 and 4 times respectively.

The **EPP, S&D, Renew, and the Greens** have almost always voted **in favour**, with the EPP having 2 votes against while Renew and the Greens have 1 vote against. S&D has consistently voted in favour. The Left, on the other hand, voted against 4 times and abstained 4 times, deeming the proposal not ambitious enough. Finally, NI (Non-Inscrits) has a heterogeneous position reflecting its composition: it includes extremely diverse parties such as Hungary's Fidesz, led by Prime Minister Orban, and Italy's Five Star Movement led by Conte.

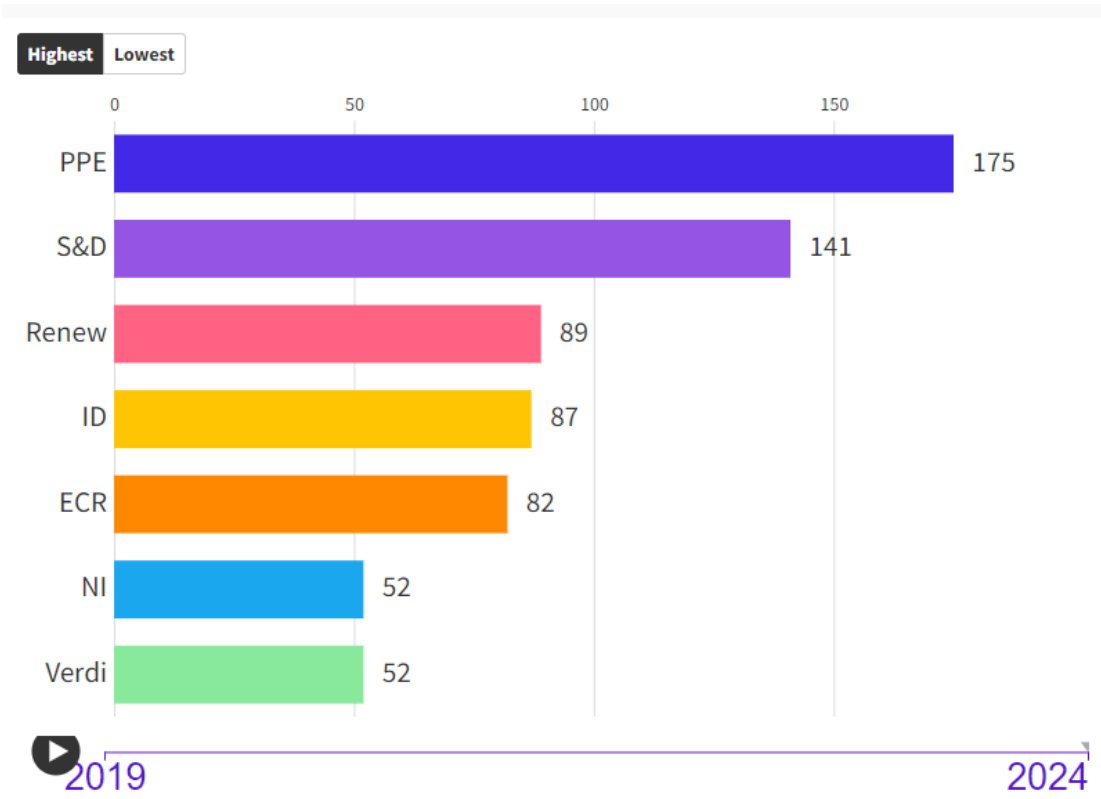
**Fig. 5 Climate Votes of European Political Groups**



**Given the sceptical or sometimes denialist position on climate change of parties affiliated with the far-right ECR and ID groups and their consistency in voting against EU climate legislations, an increase in the representation of these two groups in the European Parliament could pose a great challenge in achieving climate goals in the next European legislative term.**

The most recent forecasts from Europe Elects for November 2023 suggest that the European Parliament in 2024 (compared to 2019) will be composed of the following seats:<sup>8</sup>

- EPP 175 (-16)
- S&D 141 (-7)
- Renew 89 (-10)
- Greens 52 (-16)
- ECR 82 (+19)
- ID 87 (+10)
- The Left 38 (+3)
- NI 52 (+25)
- Unaffiliated 4



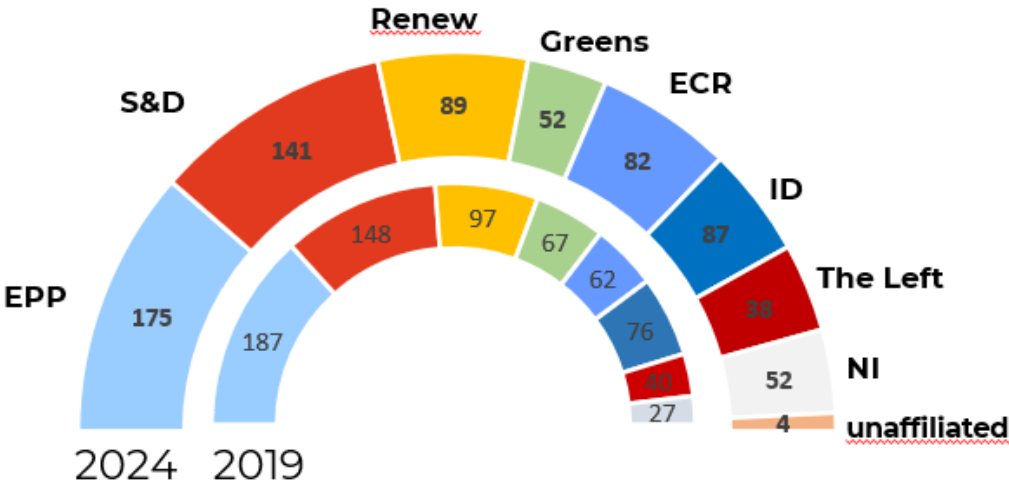
The important point is that the EPP should remain the largest party and, as in 2019, will have to choose with which other groups to form a coalition. It is possible to observe that the EPP gains 10 seats after the polish elections, while ECR reduces its edge compared to September 2023 (-4). S&D loses 4

<sup>8</sup> EPP from 187 to 175, S&D from 148 to 141, Renew from 97 to 89, Greens from 67 to 52, ECR from 62 to 82, ID from 76 to 87, The Left from 40 to 38, and NI from 27 to 52. Source: Europe Elects. It has to be taken into account that in 2019 there were 705 MEPs while in 2024 there will be 720.



votes due to the exit of the party of Robert Fico, current Slovakian prime minister.

**Fig. 6 Hypothetical Change in the Weight of the EU Political Parties 2019-2024 – Sep 2023**



Comparing the current projections with the results of the 2019 elections, and accounting for the changes [post-Brexit](#), including the exit of British MEPs, we can observe that all moderate parties are losing votes (EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens). The parties with the largest losses are the European People's Party (EPP) and the Greens.

The ECR party, of which Giorgia Meloni is the President, is growing more than any other party (+19). The far-right group ID gains 10 seats compared to 2019 while The Left gains 3.

**The European political groups that, according to the November 2023 projections, experience the greatest losses are the moderate centre-right group, represented by Von der Leyen, and the European Greens, indicating emerging criticism of both the Commission's work and the European Green Deal.**

### 3.3 The composition of the new Commission

Based on these projections, the EPP should remain the largest party, as it has been in the 2019, 2014, and 2009 elections. It will, therefore, play a prominent role in forming alliances for the future coalition and the presidency of the Commission. The seats required for a majority in the European Parliament are 361. Four scenarios, more or less favourable to climate policies, have been outlined:

- **Conservative Europe - Centre-right coalition:** If the European People's Party (**EPP**) manages to gain the support of other right-wing parties, currently in the ECR and ID groups, it could achieve a stronger majority compared to other parties and form a coalition among the parties with the most votes in the Parliament, namely **S&D and Renew**. These three parties would have a majority of **405 votes**, which could become even stronger by broadening the EPP's consensus base by including other right-wing parties. For instance, with the inclusion of Fratelli d'Italia, the majority would be of **431** votes. Such a coalition could be led by a personality representing a more conservative stance than Von der Leyen, especially regarding climate issues. The lower climate ambition would be caused by a [change in the EPP's vision](#), which is expressing positions more focused on protecting traditional industries rather than the innovation necessary to compete in global markets and against global powers, especially the USA and China, which have chosen to strongly emphasize climate policies.
- **Continuation of the Green Deal - Centre coalition:** The current Commission received support in 2019 from the major parties in the **EPP-S&D-Renew** coalition, and could count on about half of the ECR group's votes for a total of 463 votes. In this case, Von der Leyen could continue to lead the Commission, and since **there are no changes in the composition of the EPP, the gap with the socialists would be smaller**. This would imply some continuity with the current balances, 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 managing migration. However, regarding climate, it has almost never supported the Commission's proposals. On the contrary, the Greens, while not explicitly supporting this Commission, have consistently provided external support for the Green Deal when it comes to voting on climate legislations. Considering the latest available projections, the Von der Leyen majority would now be around **405 votes**. In this case, the Commission would continue the work already initiated on the Green Deal, although the majority would be less extensive than in 2019.
- **Europe of the Right** would be composed of **Renew-EPP-ECR-ID**. This majority would be around **433** MEPs. In this case, the future Commission, with two parties strongly in favour of climate action and two against, would not be able to reach an agreement on climate, which would risk putting on hold the EU legislative process. **Such a**

**majority would have been possible in 2019 with 422 votes.** This coalition could be led by a personality expressing a strongly right-wing agenda. However, the role of Renew, a party traditionally supportive of climate policies and which has consistently voted in favour of all Fit for 55 legislations, should be considered. They would likely not consider climate action a significant part of the new Commission's agenda. Furthermore, considering [Weber](#)'s recent statements, to support such a coalition, parties would have to share three key political ideas: being pro-European, ensuring support for Ukraine, and respecting the rule of law. According to Weber, this would exclude Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National, the German party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), and the Polish party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS or Law and Justice). **If we exclude these three parties from such a majority, the coalition would have for the first time since we start to collect data (April 2023), the majority of votes in the European Parliament (368 out of 361 required). However, this majority is not feasible as a right-wing and far-right configuration without Renew (EPP+ID+ECR = 344).**

- **Climate Ambition - Centre-left coalition:** Counting the parties that consistently vote in favour of climate action, which includes the EPP, S&D, Renew, and the Greens, a larger majority of **457 MEPs** would be achieved. This majority would have been even larger in 2019 (499 MEPs) if the Greens had formally been part of it. This coalition could be possible if centre and centre-right governments of member states favour ambitious climate policies and decide to support and further strengthen the European Green Deal. Considering the climate policy stances of [Weber](#) and Von der Leyen, this coalition could continue to have Von der Leyen as the President of the Commission. However, the election campaign of centre-right parties has started with strong [criticisms](#) of the Green Deal, especially regarding the Green Industrial Plan and certain elements of the Fit for 55, such as the directive on building energy performance. Therefore, the feasibility of strong support from the centre-right for the Green Deal as envisioned in 2019 appears unlikely at the moment.

Finally, **a scenario of a "Return of the Progressives" (S&D+Greens+The Left+Renew) is not currently realistic**, both due to the lack of numbers to form a majority (320 vs 361) and due to the resistance of the liberal Renew family to form a majority with more left-leaning political groups. **Similarly, a right-wing scenario without the more radical right of ID (EPP + ECR + Renew) would not have a majority (346).**

**Conclusion: Just like in 2019, the centre-right family of the People's Party holds the keys to the political game of the new Commission. What has changed is that through the "Meloni effect," the right-wing ECR, which is more conservative and sceptical about the policies of the Green Deal, is experiencing strong growth and is more credible as a governing force compared to 2019. After the most recent elections the far right group ID is also gaining votes.**

**Meloni is now at a crossroad: will she support a Europe of the conservatives, accepting the cohabitation with the liberals and the progressives and some continuity of the Green Deal (even probably with reduced ambition of some subjects), or push for and support a change towards the right- in case of victory or those political parties- hence creating discontinuity on the Green Deal? The win of Brothers of Italy seems likely, but the choices that will follow the vote are a question mark.**

## Attachment 1: CASE STUDY

### Case Green, Taxonomy, and 2035 Cars

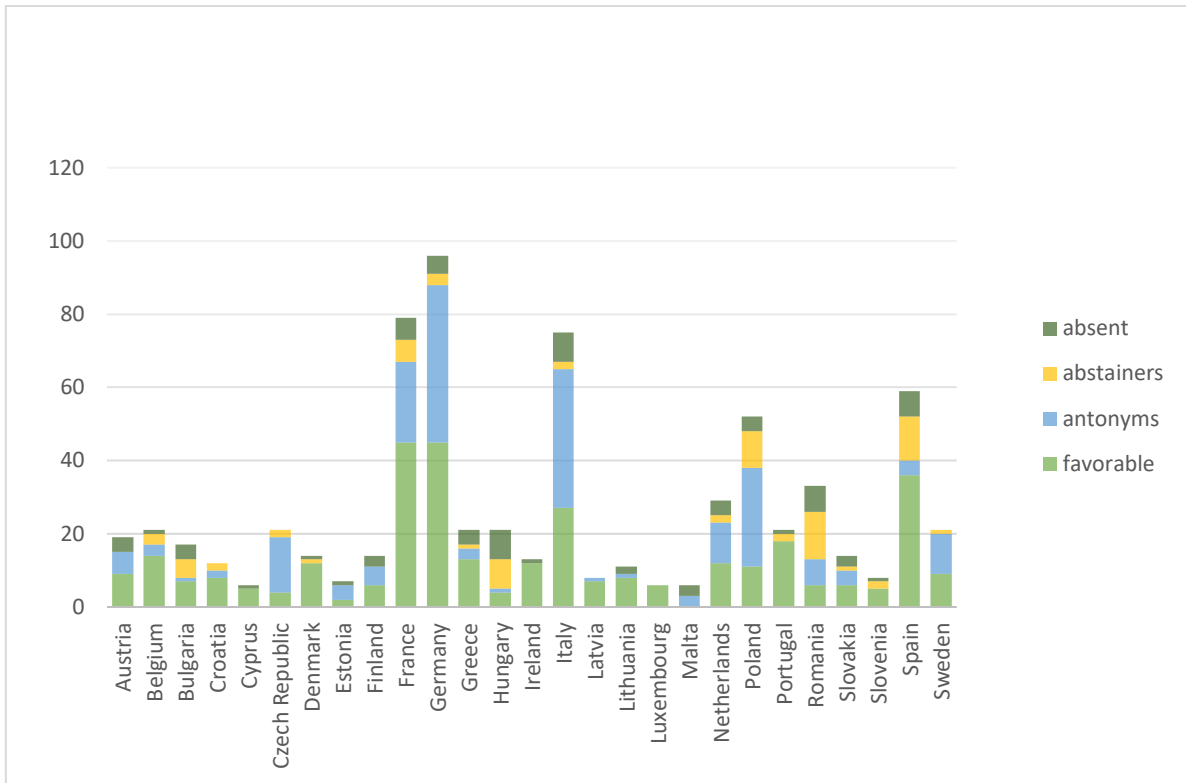
The most contested files in the Fit for 55 climate package were two: the directive on the energy performance of buildings (EPBD), nicknamed "Case Green" in Italy, and the vote on Regulation 2019/631, which bans the sale of internal combustion engine cars by 2035. Another highly relevant vote, on which intense campaigning by civil society was conducted, was the one on the second delegated act for the European taxonomy; the EU system for classifying sustainable economic activities.

### Case Green - in favour, but not too much

On March 14, 2023, Parliament voted on the amendment to the Commission's proposal on the energy performance of buildings to define the parliamentary position for negotiations between EU institutions, which would lead to the final text. The vote was characterized by the break of the majority that had supported almost all other climate legislation. In particular, the majority of right-wing and centre-right parties (ID; ECR, EPP + the majority of non-affiliated NI) voted against the Commission's proposal. Some right-wing parliamentarians, including some Italians, presented amendments aimed at weakening the directive, including one aimed at its complete rejection (amendment 10). However, this amendment was not approved, and the Parliament's proposal passed with 341 in favour, 218 against, and 78 abstentions.

From the vote, it is clear that the majority did not reach the 50 percent plus one threshold of the European Parliament (353). Instead, the majority of centre and left-wing parties (S&D, Renew, Greens, The Left) voted in favour. It is interesting to note that in this vote, the European People's Party (EPP) effectively split between opponents, supporters, and abstainers, with 59, 49, and 49 votes, respectively. **This dynamic indicates divisions within the European centre-right regarding support for the Commission's proposals.**

Analysing the possibility that votes in the EU Parliament can also occur along national lines, we can also see that parliamentarians from 12 out of 27 countries voted cohesively based on national interests rather than party lines. It is also noteworthy that Germany is very divided on this issue. Among the 12 countries that voted based on national interests, almost all are in favour.



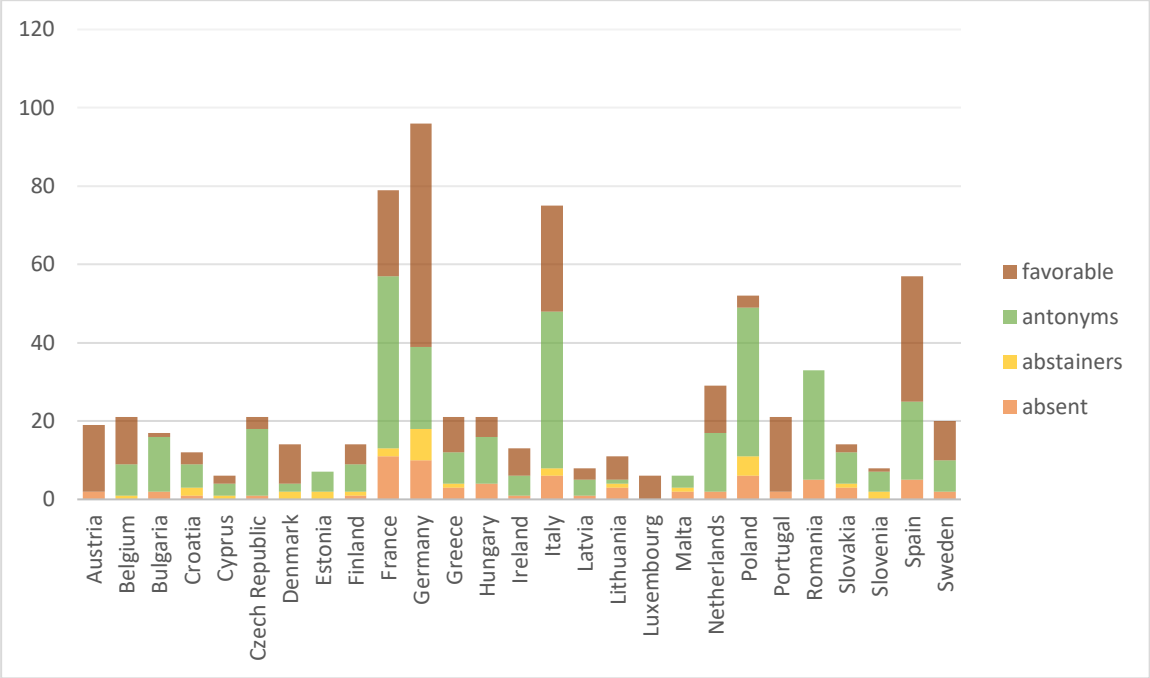
**If the vote were held today, the directive would still be approved, although the majority in favour of the directive would be reduced by 29 votes (312). Moreover, the difference between those in favour and those against would shrink (123 vs 60 votes difference)**

### **Taxonomy - Neither Full Support for Von der Leyen nor for Climate**

The vote on the second delegated act on the taxonomy in the summer of 2022, while not directly related to the Fit for 55 climate package, is a significant vote as it indicates both parliamentary support for the Commission Von der Leyen and how national and political affiliations can outweigh ambitious climate action.

The EU Parliament was called upon to express its opinion on the delegated act on the taxonomy, which allowed the possibility of classifying nuclear and gas as sustainable under certain conditions. The Parliament voted to keep it in force with a majority of 328 votes, while 278 MEPs would have preferred to reject the measure in question: 30 abstained. The majority of 353 MEPs was not reached. This shows both that the European Parliament did not give full support to a measure strongly desired by the Commission without consulting Parliament, and that the majority of MEPs present did not consider the introduction of exemptions to classify a fossil fuel as sustainable to be dangerous or misleading.

Examining the voting behaviour of European parties, it can be seen that the majority of members of right-wing, centre-right, and centre parties voted to keep the delegated act and thus consider certain natural gas productions as sustainable (ID, ECR, EPP, Renew, NI). In contrast, the majority of MEPs from centre-left/left parties (S&D, Greens, The Left) voted united against the measure. In this case, there is no division within any of the European parties. Analysing the vote by nation to understand the influence of national interests on the decision, it is evident that this dynamic can be traced in 9 out of 27 Member States, which are almost equally divided between supporters and opponents.



**If the vote were held today, the majority in favour of the delegated act would be strengthened by 30 votes (358), and the result of the vote would remain unchanged. In addition, the gap between those against and those in favour would widen (101 now vs 50 in 2022) and the in favour of the delegated act would be stronger.**

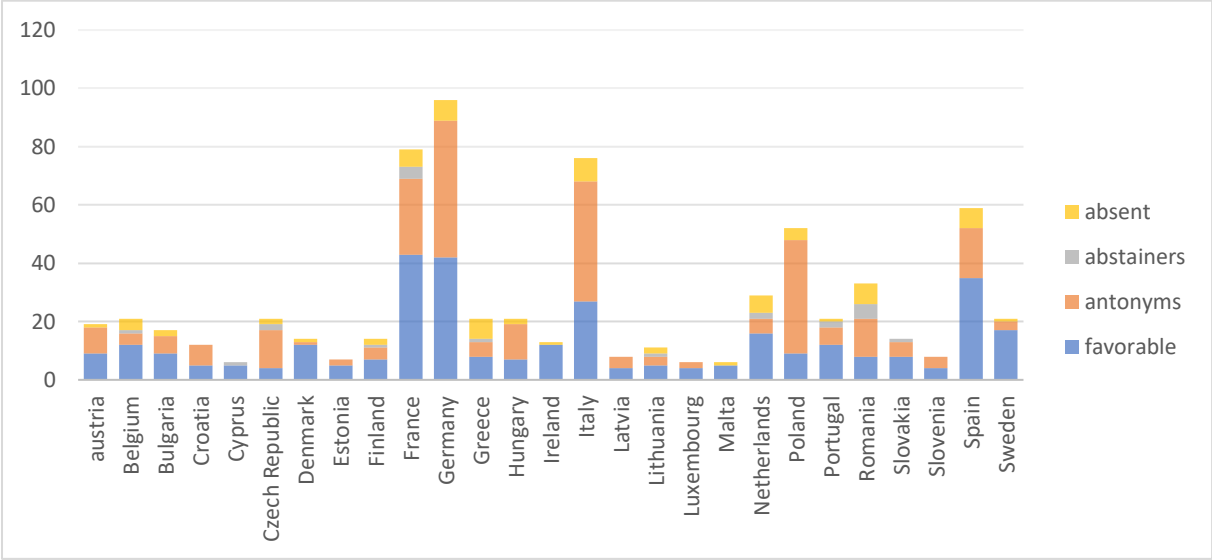
**Cars 2035 Regulation 2019/631 - Renew is key for climate action but now it would not be approved**

Regarding Regulation 2019/631, which provides for the ban on the sale of internal combustion engine cars by 2035, there were two significant votes in the European Parliament. The first took place in June 2022 when the European Parliament voted on its position, 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, although a majority threshold was not required, the votes in favour of the measure were about ten votes short of the majority of 50 percent plus one of European Parliament members (342). In this case, even more so than in the vote on the EPBD, the European People's Party (EPP) did not vote with the other parties that support the Commission (Renew and S&D) but voted against the measure (31 in favour and 112 against). The EPP thus voted with right-wing parties ECR and ID. Conversely, both the Greens and the majority of The Left supported the measure and voted in favour. Their votes, combined with those of some EPP members, allowed the parliamentary proposals to enter interinstitutional negotiations. In the second vote, almost a year later, the same dynamics were observed: right-wing parties (EPP, ECR, ID, and most of NI) voted against, while those more to the centre and left voted in favour, resulting in the approval of the agreement with 340 votes. **If the same votes were cast considering the current projections we have, the regulation would pass the first reading but it would not be approved at the final vote, by just 4 votes (314 against and 310 in favour).**

**The votes clearly demonstrate the crucial role of Renew, namely European liberal parties, for climate-related measures.**

Finally, by analysing national dynamics, it can be noted that in 7 Member States, the vote on this regulation was primarily influenced by national dynamics.





## Attachment 2- Methodology

This study employs both quantitative analysis of votes and more qualitative research methods related to the study of EU politics and political balances among institutions. To compare electoral projections in Member States, the Europe Elects, Politico Polls, and EU Matrix websites were consulted. For the analysis of votes in the Council, votes published on the Council of the European Union website were considered, specifically votes on the Effort Sharing Regulation; Regulation 2019/631 on cars; REPowerEU, Emission Trading System, Social Climate Fund, and Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism; Emission Trading System in aviation; LULUCF, Energy Efficiency Directive, Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive, Low carbon maritime fuels, renewable energy directive, refuel aviation.

For the analysis of votes in the European Parliament, data published on the Parliament's website after each vote were collected. The analysed European Parliament votes include: Regulation 2019/631 on cars on June 8, 2022; ETS in aviation on June 8, 2022; Effort Sharing Regulation on June 8, 2022; ETS Regulation on June 22, 2022; Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on June 22, 2022; Social Climate Fund on June 22, 2022; Second delegated act on taxonomy on July 6, 2022; renewable directive on September 14, 2022; energy efficiency directive on September 14, 2022; electric charging infrastructure on October 19, 2022; sustainable fuels in shipping on October 19, 2022; renewable authorizations REPowerEU on December 14, 2022; directive on energy performance of buildings on March 14, 2023; final vote on the ETS reform, introduction of CBAM, and the Social Climate Fund on April 18, 2023; Methane Emission Regulation on May 9, 2023; final vote on the Effort Sharing Regulation, final vote on the LULUCF Regulation, final vote on the Renewable Energy Directive, final vote on aviation fuels, finale vote on maritime fuels, final vote energy efficiency, final vote alternative energy infrastructure.



THE ITALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE THINK TANK

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