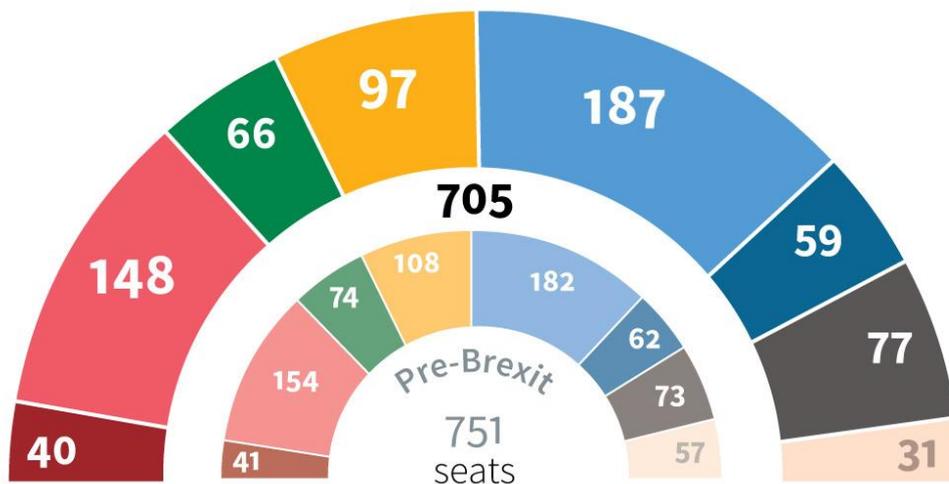# The European Parliament 2019-2024

The European elections in May 2019 saw for the first time in history a higher participation rates in the EU elections than before. The polls have led to the elections of 705 Members of the European Parliament.

The new balance of power means the loss of the majority held by the two largest political parties (Christian-democrats and social-democrats), the reinforcement of the smaller parties of the political centre (Liberals and Greens) and a consolidation of right-wing populist groups.

European Parliament

Composition after Brexit and the departure of British MEPs

705

Pre-Brexit
751 seats

Description of groups

- Far left and greens
- Socialists and social democrats
- Greens and regional parties
- Liberals and centrists

- Christian democrats
- Eurosceptic conservatives
- Far right
- Non-aligned, inc. Brexit Party and 5-Star Movement

© AFP   *Source: European Parliament*

The groups are the following, by order of size:

- European People's Party (EPP): Christian-democratic parties and those of the centre-right
- Socialists and Democrats (S&D): Socialist and social-democratic parties of the centre-left

- Renew Europe (RE): Liberal parties of the political centre
- Identity and Democracy (ID): identarian parties of the far-right
- Greens/EFA: Environmentalist and regionalist parties, often of the political left. EFA stands for 'European Free Alliance'
- European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR): Eurosceptical parties of the right
- GUE/NGL: 'United Left', leftist and (former) communist parties, including parties of the 'Nordic Green Left'
- Non-inscribed (NI): individual MEPs who have not joined any political group

What concretely does the European Parliament do?

The European Parliament adopts most **legislative texts** of the European Union and forms the directly elected lower chamber vis-à-vis of its co-legislator, the EU Council of ministers. It has also many other instruments at its disposal to influence EU policies:

- Through **resolutions** it can call for action or legislative initiatives by the European Commission and EU member states
- It elects, upon proposal of the European Council, the **President of the European Commission** and the entire College of Commissioners, after hearings of each candidate commissioner by the relevant committees
- Through **written and oral questions** to the EU Commissions, it can inquire about certain policy problems of EU relevance
- Through the **Petitions committee**, it can receive petitions by EU citizens on a particular EU-related issue and seek clarification from the European Commission
- It **adopts the budget** for the European Union together with the EU Council of ministers and votes the discharge of the European institutions about the use of this budget.

Organisation of the European Parliament

➤ Thematic work in committees

Members of the European Parliament belong to committees, which conduct the main legislative work to be adopted in the Plenary sessions. The following committees are most relevant to AGE's work and policies regarding older persons (by January 2020):

Committee	Chair	Role	Committee website
Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)	Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar (S&D, Spain)	The EU's anti-discrimination legislation	Weblink
Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)	Lucia Duris Nocholsonova (ECR, Slovakia)	Socio-economic policies including employment legislation, pensions, disability and inclusion, poverty and social exclusion, the European Social Fund and policies regarding labour market skills	Weblink
Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)	Evelyn Regner (S&D, Austria)	Transversal focus on gender issues in all policies	Weblink
Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)	Pascal Canfin (Renew Europe, France)	Policies regarding health and healthy environments	Weblink
Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON)	Irene Tinagli (S&D, Italy)	Policies regarding the economy (e.g. financial services and financial stability), but also public budgets and the European Semester	Weblink
Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)		The EU's research activities into active and healthy ageing	Weblink

Committee	Chair	Role	Committee website
	Cristian-Silviu Busoi (EPP, Romania)		
Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)	Petra De Sutter (Greens/EFA, Belgium)	Regulations to protect consumers and accessibility standards for goods and services	Weblink
Culture and Education (CULT)	Sabine Verheyen (EPP, Germany)	Policies regarding life-long learning and cultural exchanges, the Erasmus+ programme	Weblink
Petitions (PETI)	Dolors Montserrat (EPP, Spain)	Petitions submitted to the European Parliament by citizens faced with challenges that concern the EU	Weblink

AGE monitors the work of these committees especially. The chairs coordinate the work of the committees, but each committee has members of all political groups and many EU member states. Legislative files and non-legislative reports are submitted from the Committees to the Plenary for adoption by all MEPs. EP plenary takes place 10 times per year in Strasbourg or Brussels.

➢ **Informal working groups of MEPs**

In addition to their work in committees, MEPs can join interest groups or intergroups, constituted by members of different political groups and committees, to elaborate a common vision on certain topics. These are not official bodies of the European Parliament, but important fora for the discussion of common issues. **AGE actively works with an interest group of MEPs to discuss and promote the issues of older people and solidarity between generations**.

The Presidents of the European Parliament

At the highest level, the European Parliament's work is overseen by the President of the European Parliament, currently David Sassoli (S&D, Italy). There are 19 Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament representing the Parliament in different settings. Some have the special attribution to establish links with civil society:

- Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D, Portugal): European democracy and European citizen's initiative
- Katarina Barley (S&D, Germany): Information Policy, Press and Citizens Relations
- Othmar Karas (EPP, Austria): Information Policy, Press and Citizens Relations
- Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA, Finland): Human Rights and Democracy
- Dimitros Papadimoulis (GUE/NGL, Greece): Gender Equality and Diversity
- Massimo Castaldo (NI, Italy): Human Rights and Democracy

The relations of the European Parliament with senior citizens

➤ EU elections campaign

AGE actively campaigned during the 2019 EU elections campaign to include older citizen's concerns into the European political parties' manifestoes and encouraged meetings between AGE members and candidate MEPs. AGE published a **toolkit** about how senior citizens' organisations can get involved into the EU elections.

➤ Build contacts with your MEP

The most important avenue for senior citizens' organisations to connect to the European Parliament is to establish links with individual MEPs from their country. MEPs regularly spend time in their constituencies, making readily time to meet the people who elected them. Therefore, we encourage you to contact your national MEPs to meet them. List of Members of the European Parliament

➤ Contact the offices of the European Parliament in your country

The European Parliament has liaison offices in every EU member state to inform about its work. Senior's organisations can get in touch with these offices for organising events with a European dimension.

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