

Policy Paper

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# Retrospective Analysis of the 2024 European Elections: The European Parliament Renews Itself in a Europe Facing Significant Transitions

Abdessalam Saad Jaldi

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The European Elections of 2024 were marked by a significant surge in sovereigntist parties at the expense of liberals and greens, while moderate right and left-wing parties also made notable gains. Despite the substantial wins and losses during this election, no single bloc emerged with the overall majority of 361 seats in the European Parliament. The impression from the new political balances emerging from the 2024 elections is that the European People's Party, which won the electoral contest, will turn to the social democrats and liberals in Brussels to form a majority, amid significant transitions that are shaping the future of European integration and the place of the EU in the world.

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# INTRODUCTION

Voters across Europe went to the polls from June 6-9, 2024, to elect delegates to the 720-seat European Parliament, the world's only directly elected transnational governing body. Characterized by a 51% voter turnout, with a slightly higher participation rate than the previous election in 2019 (50.66%), this vast European democratic exercise, in which 393 million European citizens were called to the polls, was marked by a significant surge in sovereigntist parties at the expense of liberals and greens, while moderate right and left-wing parties also made significant gains. Despite the significant wins and losses during this election, no single bloc emerged with the overall majority of 361 seats in the European Parliament. The impression from the new political balances emerging from the 2024 elections is that the European People's Party, which won the electoral contest, will turn to the social democrats and liberals in Brussels to form a majority. This observation is further underlined by the fact that the moderate right already worked with the moderate left and liberals during the previous legislature.

Furthermore, the 2024 European elections took place amid significant transitions that are shaping the future of European integration, in a world undergoing major transformations and shaped by China-United States rivalry, which is structuring contemporary international relations. Traumatized by the Brexit episode and the tumultuous years of the Trump Administration, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war, the EU adopted during Ursula von der Leyen's first term as President of the European Commission, the EU's executive, a series of measures to strengthen its internal resilience and increase its influence in global balances. The predominance of the progressive majority composed of the European People's Party, the Social Democrats, and the Renew Europe liberals enabled the European Commission within the framework of the European Parliament to move forward with significant measures during the previous legislature. This included accelerating the European digital transition and launching the initiative for technological sovereignty with the adoption of the Chips Act. However, the rightward shift in Strasbourg-based parliament in the 2024 elections, and the rise of sovereigntist movements at the expense of liberals and greens, may reshape the European Parliament's priorities for the next five years. In this article, we delve into the powers of the European Parliament, the outcomes of the European elections, and the ongoing transitions within the EU that will shape the future of Europe.

## I. The Powers of the European Parliament

The European Parliament has been the sole institution of the EU directly elected by European citizens since 1979. Composed of 720 Members of the European Parliament representing approximately 450 million European citizens across the EU's 27 member states, the European Parliament exercises three fundamental powers: legislative, budgetary, and political oversight.

### 1. The Legislative Powers of the European Parliament

The European Parliament is involved in the adoption of EU legislative acts. The Treaty of Lisbon established the 'co-decision' procedure, now known as the ordinary legislative procedure, as the primary decision-making method in the EU. Under this framework, the European Parliament gives its first reading opinion on a proposal from the European Commission, then submits its position to the Council of the EU, in which member-state governments meet.

If the Council approves amendments made by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs),

the act can be adopted. However, if the Council adopts a different position, the Parliament has a period of three months, which can be extended by one month upon request, to react. It then gives its second reading and decides either to accept the Council's position, to amend it again, which sends it back to the Council, or to reject it, thus preventing the proposal from being adopted. In other words, except in cases provided for by the treaties, a text cannot be adopted if there is disagreement between the Council and the European Parliament. In the event of persistent disagreement, the act is examined by a conciliation committee, also known as a 'trilogue'. This is an informal meeting gathering representatives from the three European institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council) involved in the European legislative process. It allows for facilitating compromises when there are disagreements on a text between the European Parliament and the Council, with the Commission serving as a mediator. Let us note in this perspective that most legislation, unless it is really straightforward, ends up in trialogue.

In principle, the ordinary procedure covers 85 areas of competence. There are also several special procedures, particularly: 1) the approval procedure, which does not allow Parliament to amend a text but gives it a veto right in 16 areas including the investiture of the Commission, accession of new members to the EU, the signing of international agreements, and judicial cooperation in criminal matters; 2) the consultation procedure, mandatory in around fifty areas, requires the European Parliament to give a non-binding opinion; and 3) the right of initiative, which allows European Parliament to request the Commission to submit a proposal.

## 2. The Budgetary Power of the European Parliament

The European Parliament, in collaboration with the Council, establishes the annual budget of the EU. The European Commission prepares a draft budget which it presents to both institutions that share the legislative procedure. The Council then adopts a position, which it transmits to the European Parliament. If the European Parliament approves the Council's position or abstains from making a decision, the budget is adopted. However, if the European Parliament adopts amendments, the draft budget is sent back to the Council and the European Commission. A conciliation committee is convened, tasked with reaching a joint proposal within 21 days. Ultimately, it is up to the European Parliament to reject or approve this joint proposal (by a majority of its members and three-fifths of the votes cast).

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the EU (the seven-year budget plan) is adopted through a special legislative procedure requiring unanimity in the Council after approval by the European Parliament.

## 3. The Scrutiny Power of the European Parliament

The European Parliament plays a decisive role in the appointment of the European Commission. It elects the President of this institution by an absolute majority, based on a proposal from the European Council. Subsequently, Members of the European Parliament can approve or reject the rest of the team (the College of Commissioners) after conducting hearings for each candidate nominated by the Member States;

The European Parliament can also censure the European Commission, by a two-thirds majority of votes cast and a majority of its members, which would then require the Commission to collectively resign.

In terms of oversight, the European Parliament can also pose written or oral questions to the Council and the European Commission, receive petitions from European citizens, and establish

temporary investigative committees in cases of breaches or improper application of EU law. Finally, it has the right to appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

## II. The New Composition of the European Parliament After the 2024 Elections

The 2024 European elections did not bring about major change to the composition of the European Parliament compared to the 2019 elections. While the moderate right consolidated its position as the largest political group, ahead of the social democrats who came second, sovereigntists made gains. Meanwhile, liberals and Greens lost seats.

Political Blocs	Seats	Outgoing Parliament	Evolution
European People's Party (EPP)	188	176	+9
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	136	139	-3
Patriots for Europe (Former Identity and Democracy: ID)	84	49	-35
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	78	69	+9
Renew Europe	76	102	-26
Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	53	71	-18
The Left Group (GUE/NGL)	46	37	+9
Non-Inscrits	27	62	-35
Others	32	0	0

### 1. The Moderate Right and the Moderate Left are Stabilizing

The 2024 European elections were characterized by the relative stability of the two main groups in the European Parliament, representing the traditional European political families of right and left, namely the European People's Party (EPP) group and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group. The EPP group brings together several positions, from center-right to Christian right and even nationalists. Focused on issues of competitiveness and growth, it prioritizes economic policies such as protecting small businesses and defending free trade<sup>1</sup>. The EPP also prioritizes borders and security as one of its key focuses. It proposes to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism and combat illegal immigration<sup>2</sup>. Advocating a progressive stance, the S&D group promotes an inclusive European society based on freedom, equality, solidarity, diversity, and fairness<sup>3</sup>. It aims to achieve sustainable equality in the social, economic, political, and territorial dimensions through investment in social inclusion, greening the economy, and combating all forms of inequality<sup>4</sup>. The group also supports a solidarity-based approach to migration and refugee policy,

1. European People's Party (EPP) group. The European People's Party. Our commitment to a strong Europe. <https://www.epp.eu/>

2. Ibid.

3. Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group. What we stand for. <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/what-we-stand-for/our-priorities>

4. Ibid.

and actively promotes global stability and democracy<sup>5</sup>.

At the end of the European elections, the EPP group, in which French representatives from The Republicans (LR) and German Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) hold particular influence, retained its first place with 12 additional seats (188 Members of the European Parliament, compared to 176 at the end of the 2019-2024 term)<sup>6</sup>. The national parties affiliated with the European People's Party (PPE) came first in 13 member states. Starting with Germany, Ursula von der Leyen's country, the alliance between CDU and CSU secured 30% of the votes for 29 out of the 96 seats allocated to the country<sup>7</sup>. In Poland, Prime Minister Donald Tusk's coalition also led the election (37.06% and 20 seats), as did the People's Party in Spain, with 34.18% and 20 seats, and New Democracy, the party of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis (28.31% and 7 seats)<sup>8</sup>. Conservatives also topped the polls in the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and in Finland<sup>9</sup>. "Thank you to the voters who have placed their trust in the European People's Party, once again making it the strongest political force in the European Parliament", celebrated Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission and leader of the conservatives<sup>10</sup>. Candidate for a new term at the helm of the European Commission, she appears to have secured a majority with over 400 seats allocated to her group, along with the Social Democrats and the Liberals of Renew, out of the 720 future Members of the European Parliament.

## European People's Party (EPP) group

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
Austrian People's Party	Austria	5
Christian Democratic and Flemish	Belgium	2
Christian Social Party	Belgium	1
Coalition Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria - Union of Democratic Forces	Bulgaria	5
We Continue the Change	Bulgaria	1
Croatian Democratic Union	Croatia	6
Democratic Rally	Cyprus	2
Mayors and Independents	Czechia	2
Together	Czechia	3
Conservative People's Party	Denmark	1
Liberal Alliance	Denmark	1

5. Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group. What we stand for. <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/what-we-stand-for/our-priorities>

6. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Valentin Ledroit. Elections européennes 2024 : conservateurs en tête, poussée limitée de l'extrême droite... ce qu'il faut retenir du scrutin dans l'ensemble de l'Union européenne. Toute l'Europe. June 2024. <https://www.touteurope.eu/vie-politique-des-etats-membres/elections-europeennes-2024-conservateurs-en-tete-poussee-limitee-de-l-extreme-droite-ce-qu-il-faut-retenir-du-scrutin-dans-l-ensemble-de-l-union-europeenne/>

Fatherland	Estonia	2
National Coalition Party	Finland	4
Les Républicains	France	6
Christian Democratic Union of Germany	Germany	29
Familie	Germany	1
New Democracy	Greece	7
Respect and Freedom Party	Hungary	7
Fine Gael	Ireland	4
Forza italia - Noi Moderati	Italy	8
South Tyrolean People's Party	Italy	1
New Unity	Latvia	2
Christian Social People's Party	Luxembourg	2
Nationalist Party	Malte	3
Christian Democratic Appeal	Netherlands	3
Farmer–Citizen Movement	Netherlands	2
New Social Contract	Netherlands	1
Civic Coalition	Poland	21
Third Way	Poland	2
Democratic Alliance	Portugal	7
National Liberal Party	Romania	8
Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania	Romania	2
Slovenian Democratic Party	Slovenia	4
New Slovenia	Slovenia	1
Popular Party	Spain	22
Moderate Party	Sweden	4
Christian Democrats	Sweden	1

The (S&D) group, political group of the Party of European Socialists (PES), would be in a similar situation, but with a slight decrease, dropping from 139 to 136 members (-3)<sup>11</sup>. Among its ranks are French MEPs from the Socialist Party and Place publique (PS-PP), as well as those from the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). The S&D group thus remains the second largest political force in the European Parliament. The Social Democrats notably experienced a resurgence in Portugal, where they narrowly won the election with 32.08% of the votes and 8 seats, after narrowly missing out in the legislative elections in March<sup>12</sup>. The Swedes also placed the Social Democrats in first position with 24.80% of the votes and 5 seats, as did the Maltese (45.26% and 3 seats)<sup>13</sup>. *“Together, we stand for a Europe that is not only economically prosperous but also environmentally conscious*

11. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

*and socially just. By upholding these principles, we can create a resilient and harmonious future for all European citizens!*" , affirmed the S&D group in a tweet<sup>14</sup>.

### Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
Social Democratic Party of Austria	Austria	5
Vooruit	Belgium	1
Parti Socialiste (PS)	Belgium	1
Bulgarian Socialist Party	Bulgaria	2
Rivers of Justice	Croatia	4
The Democratic Party	Cyprus	1
The Social Democratic Party in Denmark	Denmark	3
Social Democratic Party	Estonia	2
Social Democratic Party of Finland	Finland	2
Parti socialiste et Place Publique	France	13
Social Democratic Party	Germany	14
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	Greece	3
Hungarian Socialist Party	Hungary	2
Labour Party	Ireland	1
Partito Democratico	Italy	21
Social Democratic Party	Latvia	1
Social Democratic Party	Lithuania	2
Luxembourg Socialist Workers Party	Luxembourg	1
Labour Party	Malte	3
Labour Party	Netherlands	4
The Left	Poland	3
Socialist Party	Portugal	8
Social-Democratic Party	Romania	11
Social Democrats	Slovenia	1
Spanish Socialist Workers Party	Spain	20
Swedish Social Democratic Party	Sweden	5

14. Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group. The European election has brought us a new progressive force across Europe! <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/>



## 2. The Significant Breakthrough of Sovereignist Parties

The sovereignist parties, comprising the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and the Patriots for Europe (former Identity and Democracy: ID) groups, saw a significant surge during the 2024 European elections. Antifederalist and committed to the sovereignty of member states, the ECR describes itself as 'Euro-realistic'. It believes that *"the Union has a role to play in the 21st century, but it should focus on implementing cooperation among its member states and finding practical solutions to the issues and challenges of the 2050s, not the 1950s"*<sup>15</sup>. It aims, through a *"more flexible and decentralized Europe, to reduce bureaucracy"*<sup>16</sup>. The group also advocates *"for equal treatment of all member states, pushing the EU to be more fiscally responsible, finding new ways to connect people and businesses, creating solutions to the migrant crisis and the terrorist threat, and adopting a comprehensive approach to enhance European competitiveness on the global stage"*<sup>17</sup>.

Patriots for Europe has taken the place of Identity and Democracy was formed in late June. The bloc shared obvious similarities including a rejection of immigration and multiculturalism, euroscepticism, and hostility towards Islam, but are nonetheless divided by certain fractures. For example, this is evident in their approach to migration, where they advocate for different solutions: while the Italian League, given its country's exposure to migratory flows, has long supported a European response to the distribution of asylum seekers, the National Rally (RN) opposes such measures.

On the side of the ECR situated on the right of the European political spectrum, the European elections saw a significant increase in their numbers. Fourteen new elected members increased the Euroskeptic contingent, bringing their number of parliamentarians to 83, up from 69 at the end of the 2019-2024 term<sup>18</sup>. This increase would now make the ECR group the third largest political force in the hemicycle, after the European People's Party (EPP) group and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group. The results achieved by the political party of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Fratelli d'Italia, are very significant. It not only came first in Italy with 28.77% of the votes but also more than doubled its number of MEPs, rising to 24 from 10 before the European elections<sup>19</sup>.

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15. European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). Visions for Europe. [https://ecrgroup.eu/vision\\_for\\_europe](https://ecrgroup.eu/vision_for_europe)

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

19. Ibid.

## European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
New Flemish Alliance	Belgium	3
There Is Such a People	Bulgaria	1
Homeland Movement	Croatia	1
The National People's Front	Chypre	1
Coalition SPOLU (SPOLU)	Czechia	3
Danish People's Party	Denmark	1
La France fière	France	4
Greek Solution	Greece	2
Fratelli d'Italia	Italy	24
National Alliance	Latvia	2
United List	Latvia	1
Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union	Lithuania	1
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania	Lithuania	1
Alternative Democratic Reform Party	Luxembourg	1
Reformed Political Party	Netherlands	1
Law and Justice	Poland	20
Chega Party	Portugal	2
Alliance for the Union of Romanians	Romania	6
Sweden Democrats	Sweden	3

Patriots for Europe who has taken the place of Identity and Democracy was formed in late June.<sup>20</sup> Resulting of an alliance between the former Identity and Democracy group in Europe, shaped by the National Rally, Viktor Orbán's Fidesz, the Austrians from the FPÖ, and the Czechs from ANO, this bloc, with its 83 seats, will become the third largest political force in the European Parliament.<sup>21</sup> It will be behind the 188 conservative deputies of the European People's Party (EPP) and the 136 social democrats (S&D), but ahead of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) with their 78 MEPs, and the liberals of Renew Europe with their 76 members. These figures still need to be confirmed by the services of the European Parliament.<sup>22</sup> The Patriots for Europe shared obvious similarities with ECR, including a rejection of immigration, multiculturalism, and euroscepticism, but are nonetheless divided by certain fractures, both in form and substance. In form, while the Hungarian Prime Minister had advocated for several months for the creation of a broad sovereigntist coalition uniting the two existing groups, ID and ECR, the proposed merger was rejected by Giorgia Meloni.

20. Politico. Patriots for Europe becomes EU parliament's 3rd-largest group, picks Jordan Bardella as president. July 2024. <https://www.politico.eu/article/patriots-for-europe-jordan-bardella-viktor-orban-marine-le-pen/>

21. Ibid.

22. Valentin Ledroit. Jordan Bardella élu président d'un nouveau groupe d'extrême droite au Parlement européen. July 2024. <https://www.toute-leurope.eu/institutions/jordan-bardella-elu-president-d-un-nouveau-groupe-d-extreme-droite-au-parlement-europeen/>

She refused to ally with certain member parties of the ID group, including the National Rally.<sup>23</sup> In substance, Patriots for Europe and ECR oppose each other directly on societal issues and foreign policy. Concerning the societal issues, ECR does not hide her reservations regarding abortion. For Patriots for Europe, the real battle is civilizational, demographic, and nativist. About foreign policy, ECR aims to establish a European pillar within NATO and intends to further the European defense project, while the Patriots for Europe supports an autonomous European defense diplomacy.

## Patriots for Europe

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
Freedom Party of Austria	Austria	6
Vlaams Belang	Belgium	3
Coalition SPD a Trikolora	Czechia	1
Danish People's Party	Denmark	1
Conservative People's Party of Estonia	Estonia	1
The Finns Party	Finland	1
Rassemblement national	France	30
Lega Salvini Premier	Italy	8
Party for Freedom	Netherlands	6
Alliance for the Union of Romanians	Romania	3
Fidesz	Hungary	10
Vox	Spain	7
Chega	Portugal	2

On the other hand, the reinforcement of sovereigntist parties is also evident through the composition of the Non-Inscrits group, although it has decreased from 62 to 45 MEPs (-17). Not all members of this group are ideologically aligned with the far right, but it includes 15 German nationalists from AfD expelled from the ID group, as well as 10 MEPs from Fidesz, the ruling party in Hungary led by Viktor Orbán<sup>24</sup>. The former achieved second place in Germany, notably overturning the government coalition led by Chancellor Olaf Scholz. AfD and Fidesz could join one of the existing sovereigntist groups or attempt to form a third one<sup>25</sup>.

23. Ibid.

24. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

25. Ibid.

## Non-Inscrits group

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
Revival	Bulgaria	3
Fidias Panayiotou	Cyprus	1
Action of Dissatisfied Citizens	Czechia	7
Coalition Enough!	Czechia	1
Přísaha a Motoristé	Czechia	2
Alternative for Germany	Germany	15
Reason and Justice Alliance	Germany	12
Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative	Germany	2
Party of Progress	Germany	1
Communist Party of Greece	Greece	2
Democratic Patriotic Movement – Victory	Greece	1
Course of Freedom	Greece	1
Foni Logikis	Greece	1
Fidesz–KDNP	Hungary	11
Our Homeland Movement	Hungary	1
Independent Ireland	Ireland	1
Independent/Neamhspleách	Ireland	1
Five Star Movement	Italy	8
Latvia First	Latvia	1
Lithuanian Centre Party	Lithuania	1
Confederation Liberty and Independence	Poland	6
S.O.S. Romania	Romania	2
Social Democracy	Slovakia	5
Republika	Slovakia	2
In Spain Se Acabó La Fiesta	Spain	3
Junts UE	Spain	1

Finally, some sovereigntist parties faced setbacks. In Hungary, Fidesz performed less well than in 2019 with 44.79% of the votes (securing 10 seats), compared to nearly 53% five years ago. The same trend applies to the ultra-conservatives of the Polish party Law and Justice, who lost 7 MEPs (reducing their seats to 20 with 36.16% of the votes)<sup>26</sup>. Sweden Democrats, on the other hand, only

26. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

reached fourth place in the European elections and secured 3 seats<sup>27</sup>. The impression that emerges is that the growth of the two sovereigntist groups is limited for now (+13 MEPs), pending further realignments and potential political agreements. The AfD (15 MEPs) and Viktor Orbán's Fidesz (10 MEPs) are currently classified among the Non-Inscrits.

### 3. The Weakening of the Liberals, Greens, and the Far Left

The liberal (Renew Europe) and Green blocs appear to be the major losers of the 2024 European elections. The first advocates a federalist vision of Europe, supporting deeper European integration. Although the parties within it hold diverse political positions, liberal MEPs also share values such as the defense of individual freedoms. The Greens, meanwhile, although comprising different political sensibilities, have well-defined priorities and generally vote cohesively. The group advocates for an ecological approach to the economy and sustainable development (energy, agriculture...), and regularly opposes the negotiation of free trade agreements such as Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between EU and Canada (CETA). Social and fiscal justice is also among the priorities of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA), who are generally positioned towards the left of the political spectrum.

In sharp contrast to their strong showing in the 2019 European elections, the liberal and Green groups suffered a significant setback in the 2024 elections. Renew Europe, which includes representatives from the French presidential majority and Spain's Ciudadanos, lost 28 seats, reducing their number of MEPs from 102 to 74, including 13 French MEPs<sup>28</sup>. This represents the largest decline among all political groups in the European Parliament. As a result, the liberals are set to lose their status as the third largest political group to the ECR.

#### Renew Europe

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
The New Austria and Liberal Forum	Austria	2
Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	Belgium	1
Mouvement Réformateur (MR)	Belgium	1
Les Engagés	Belgium	1
Movement for Rights and Freedoms	Bulgaria	3
Democratic Bulgaria	Bulgaria	2
Venstre, Danmarks Liberale Parti	Denmark	2
Danish Social Liberal Party	Denmark	1
The Moderates	Denmark	1
Estonian Reform Party	Estonia	1
Estonian Centre Party	Estonia	1
Centre Party	Finland	2
Swedish People's Party in Finland's	Finland	1

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

Renaissance	France	13
Free Democratic Party	Germany	5
Free Voters	Germany	3
The Republican Party	Ireland	4
For Latvia's Development	Latvia	1
Freedom Party	Lithuania	1
Liberals' Movement	Lithuania	1
Democratic Party	Luxembourg	1
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	Netherlands	4
Democrats 66	Netherlands	3
Liberal Initiative	Portugal	2
Nicolae Bogdănel Ștefănuță	Romania	1
Progressive Slovakia	Slovakia	6
Freedom Movement	Slovenia	2
Coalition for a Solidary Europe	Spain	1
Centre Party	Sweden	2
The Liberals	Sweden	1
Democratic Bulgaria	Bulgaria	2

On the side of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA), the loss is estimated at 18 seats, which constitutes a quarter of their membership. Though they came first in Denmark with 17.42% and 3 seats, the group, which includes French MEPs from Europe Ecology, The Greens (EELV), and Germans from Die Grünen, would decrease from 71 to 53 MEPs<sup>29</sup>. Previously the fourth largest group, the Greens would thus drop one position.

### Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
The Greens – The Green Alternative	Austria	2
Groen	Belgium	1
Ecologistes Confédérés pour l'Organisation de Luttes Originales (ECOLO)	Belgium	1
We can!	Croatia	1
Czech Pirate Party	Czechia	1
The Green Left	Denmark	3
Green League	Finland	2
Les Ecologistes	France	5

29. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

Die Grünen	Germany	12
Volt Germany	Germany	3
Ecological Democratic Party	Germany	1
Greens and Left Alliance	Italy	4
The Progressives	Latvia	1
Union of Democrats "For Lithuania"	Lithuania	1
The Greens	Luxembourg	1
Green Left	Netherlands	4
Volt Netherlands	Netherlands	2
Green Party	Slovenia	1
Green Party	Sweden	3

Finally, the Left group in the European Parliament (GUE/NGL) would retain its position as the smallest political group. Gathering among others the elected members of La France insoumise (LFI) and Die Linke in Germany, it would see its contingent remain relatively stable, at 46 MEPs compared to 37 previously (+2)<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, the political family (GUE/NGL) defines itself as 'confederal', meaning opposed to the current European construction. *"We fight for more jobs and better education opportunities, for social security and social solidarity, for respectful management of our land and its resources, for cultural exchanges and diversity, for sustainable economic development, and for a coherent and strong peace policy"*<sup>31</sup>, reads the group's website. The parliamentary bloc in question advocates notably for a reform of the EU architecture to make it more democratic. It also calls for a new model of ecological development as an alternative to austerity policies. Additionally, the party promotes a policy of cooperation with third countries based on respect for human rights.

### The Left Group (GUE/NGL)

Political Parties	Country	Parliamentary seats
Workers Party of Belgium	Belgium	2
Progressive Party of Working People	Cyprus	1
Red-Green Alliance	Denmark	1
Left Alliance	Finland	3
La France Insoumise	France	9
The Left	Germany	3
The Human Environment Animal Protection Party	Germany	1
Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA)	Greece	4
Ourselves (Sinn Féin)	Ireland	2
Party for the Animals	Netherlands	1

30. European Parliament. 2024 European election results. <https://results.elections.europa.eu/en/index.html>

31. GUE/NGL – The Left in the European Parliament. <https://www.guengl.eu/about-the-group/>

Left Bloc	Portugal	1
Unitary Democratic Coalition	Portugal	1
Ahora Repúblicas	Spain	1
Sumar	Spain	1
Podemos	Spain	2
Left Party	Sweden	2

### III. An EU Grappling With Significant Transitions

The European elections took place at a time when the EU is undergoing significant transitions, further accelerated by the COVID-19 health crisis and the war in Ukraine. The new European executive along with the European institutions, will have the task of supporting these initiated transitions in order to shape the future of Europe, beyond the new political balances in the European Parliament resulting from the June 2024 election. Challenges include the European Green Deal being challenged by the farmers' crisis, the acceleration of the digital transition, the Chips Act as a spearhead of European technological sovereignty, new-generation free-trade agreements as pillar of the new EU trade policy, the limits of the European Pact on migration and asylum, and the European geopolitical transition.

#### 1. The European Green Deal Tested by the Farmers' Crisis

The European Green Deal has enabled the EU to establish itself as a leader in international efforts to combat climate change. The European Green Deal has been defined by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as *"the new growth strategy of the EU aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions"*<sup>32</sup>. It aims to transform numerous economic sectors with two main ambitions: achieve climate neutrality by 2050, starting by reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Since the European Green Deal was first presented to the European Parliament in July 2019, European institutions have passed a series of laws. These aim, on the one hand, to align EU policies and legislation with the objective of climate neutrality, and on the other hand, to fulfill the EU's climate commitments on the international stage<sup>33</sup>. Numerous sensitive issues have been the subject of agreements, such as the end of sales of new combustion engine vehicles in 2035, and the distribution between member states of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However, nearly five years since the launch of the European Green Deal, it is clear that energy and climate-related issues have progressed more rapidly than those related to biodiversity or agriculture. This observation is principally explained by the war in Ukraine, which has caused significant disruptions to the European energy and food supply chains. Four flagship initiatives have stood out among other measures adopted within the framework of the European Green Deal. These include the reform of the carbon market, the carbon border adjustment mechanism, the Social Climate Fund aimed at mitigating the social impact of the ecological transition, and the law on nature restoration. These initiatives collectively represent the cornerstones of the European Green Deal.

32. Arthur Olivier. Qu'est-ce que le Pacte vert pour l'Europe ? Toute l'Europe. June 2024. <https://www.touteurope.eu/economie-et-social/qu-est-ce-que-le-pacte-vert-pour-l-europe>

33. Ibid.



The Green Deal ambitions have been targeted by angry European farmers. They criticize the Green Deal and its agricultural component, for having unrealistic and unsustainable goals for their sector. Indeed, in 2020, the European Commission presided over by Ursula von der Leyen, which made environmental and climate issues a priority of its mandate, presented, as part of the Green Deal, two strategies that shook European farmers: the so-called 'Farm to Fork' strategy and the Strategy for Biodiversity<sup>34</sup>. These two strategies were perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a victory for environmental movements, which have a strong influence on the Commission, over farmers<sup>35</sup>. They were quickly challenged and criticized in the wake of converging expert reports, including one from the EU's Joint Research Centre, showing that they could lead to sharp reductions in production (in excess of 10%) and, as a result, a decrease in exports and an increase in imports of agricultural products into the EU<sup>36</sup>.

The Farm to Fork Strategy crystallized European farmers' opposition to the European Green Deal, particularly the objective of reducing pesticide use by 50% by 2030, which aroused the strongest hostility in the farming world<sup>37</sup>. The other two reduction targets for synthetic fertilizers (-20%) and antibiotics (-50%) in livestock farming seem more realistic<sup>38</sup>. As for the objective of increasing the area devoted to organic farming from the current 10% to 25% by 2030, this is all the more unrealistic given that the rise in food prices since the war in Ukraine has led to a decrease in sales of organically produced food<sup>39</sup>. These measures have increased farmers' distrust of the European Green Deal, leading them to organize large-scale demonstrations that took on significant proportions, notably in France, Germany, Poland, and Romania, during a European election year. Christiane Lambert, President of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations in the EU (Copa-Cogeca), saw in these agricultural grievances a shared frustration: *"Farmers want to contribute to the fight against climate change. However, we must be careful not to set the bar too high. We are facing an accumulation of environmental regulations that threaten the viability of our farms"*<sup>40</sup>.

## 2. Acceleration of the European Digital Transition

EU digital sovereignty, was established as a priority by Ursula von der Leyen's Commission. The first theoretical discussion on digital sovereignty in Europe dates back to 2006, but it was during the 2010s that the concept gained popularity, particularly among EU member states following Edward Snowden's revelations about American surveillance<sup>41</sup>. In European institutions, from the beginning of Ursula von der Leyen's first presidency, digital sovereignty was explicitly cited among the priorities of the new European Commission<sup>42</sup>. During von der Leyen's first term, the EU adopted a series of measures to establish its digital sovereignty, particularly in relation to the United States and China. Three flagship laws exemplify this digital momentum: the Digital Markets Act (DMA), the Digital Services Act (DSA), and the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI). These three laws now constitute

34. Bernard Bourget. The various causes of the agricultural crisis in Europe. Robert Schuman Foundation. February 2024. <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/738-the-various-causes-of-the-agricultural-crisis-in-europe>

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Angelo Di Mambro. EU farmers chief calls for vice-president for agriculture in next Commission. EURACTIV. July 2024. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/eu-farmers-chief-calls-for-vice-president-for-agriculture-in-next-commission/>

41. Mathilde Velliet. Digital Sovereignty: European Policies, American Dilemmas. Institut Français des Relations internationales (IFRI). January 2023. <https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/digital-sovereignty-european-policies-american-dilemmas>

42. Ibid.

the pillars of European digital policy.

The DMA, adopted in 2022, aims to regulate the economic activity of large digital platforms operating within the EU, to prevent any form of unfair competition. Indeed, faced with the dominance of American oligopolies in the European digital market, the DMA has endeavored to subject 24 platforms owned by seven digital giants—Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Booking, Bytedance, Meta, and Microsoft—to better regulation within its framework. This is aimed at preventing any form of abuse, thereby enabling businesses on the continent, especially SMEs, to thrive. The digital platforms targeted by the DMA are distinguished by their annual turnover of at least €7.5 billion within the European Economic Area, and their usage by at least 45 million Europeans monthly and at least 10,000 professionals annually within the Union<sup>43</sup>. This law notably enables in sanctions against abuses of dominant position. The company was accused of promoting its search engine and Chrome browser on mobile phones to the detriment of its competitors. Among other practices under scrutiny is tax optimization. Due to the digital nature of their services, companies can establish their headquarters and declare profits in one country while offering services across the entire EU.

The DSA, adopted in 2023, also aims to protect Europeans from the downsides of the digital transition. It imposes greater responsibility on 17 digital platforms (Alibaba AliExpress, Amazon Store, Apple AppStore, Booking.com, Facebook, Google Play, Google Maps, Google Shopping, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, X (ex-Twitter), Wikipedia, YouTube, and Zalando), and two very large online search engines, Bing and Google Search, for limiting the spread of fake news in the EU<sup>44</sup>. Beyond fake news, the DSA aims to protect European citizens from illicit content circulating on the internet<sup>45</sup>. It aims to block the online sale of dangerous products or counterfeits. The example of the standoff between the European Commission and TikTok is very revealing. On February 19, 2024, the European Commission launched an investigation against TikTok, accusing it of insufficient measures regarding child protection, transparency in advertising, access for researchers to its data, and for not adequately limiting the risks of addiction and harmful content dissemination<sup>46</sup>. On April 22, 2024, the platform was again targeted by the European Commission for its 'Task and Reward Program' on TikTok Lite, which rewards users based on screen time, raising concerns about potential addiction effects<sup>47</sup>. Two days later, the social network announced the suspension of this feature in Europe. Finally, the DSA takes care not to fall into the opposite extreme of limiting freedom of expression. It therefore includes a number of rights, such as provisions for authors whose content may be unjustifiably removed.

The AI Act adopted in April 2024 aims to develop artificial intelligence, harnessing its social and economic potential while also regulating potential legal and ethical risks. Overall, the legislation strikes a balance between regulating risky practices and encouraging innovation<sup>48</sup>. The AI Act is based on two complementary pillars: firstly, the classification of AI systems, and secondly, the

43 Official Journal of the European Union. Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Digital Markets Act). September 2022. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022R1925>

44 Official Journal of the European Union. Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act). October 2022. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R2065>

45 Ibid.

46 European Commission. Commission opens formal proceedings against TikTok under the Digital Services Act. February 2024. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_24\\_926](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_24_926)

47 European Commission. Commission opens proceedings against TikTok under the DSA regarding the launch of TikTok Lite in France and Spain, and communicates its intention to suspend the reward programme in the EU. April 2024. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_24\\_2227](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_2227)

48 European Parliament. Artificial Intelligence Act: MEPs adopt landmark law. March 2024. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240308IPR19015/artificial-intelligence-act-meps-adopt-landmark-law>

free flow of data within the EU. Regarding the first pillar, the European Parliament has opted for a risk-based approach for trustworthy artificial intelligence to prevent Big Brother-like abuses<sup>49</sup>. This approach categorizes AI systems into unacceptable risks, high risks, low risks, and minimal risks<sup>50</sup>. Concerning the second pillar, In response to the observed lag behind the United States and China in artificial intelligence, the European Parliament has approved the creation of a single market for data to enable the free flow of data within the EU, while respecting European rules on competition and privacy protection<sup>51</sup>.

### 3. Chips Act: Spearhead of European Technological Sovereignty

The issue of European technological sovereignty is taking on an increasingly central role in the actions of European institutions. In the face of the technological supply difficulties and threats to technology highlighted by the China-U.S. rivalry, the EU was going to seriously take on this project, while the head of the European executive Ursula von der Leyen placed the European technological sovereignty at the heart of her commission's actions. Two particularly significant trends have illustrated this shift. On the one hand, the vision of a 'geopolitical' role for the Commission, expressed by President Von Der Leyen in her inaugural speech to the European Parliament in 2019, made explicit the desire for greater weight at the global level and requires recognition of competition with the United States and China<sup>52</sup>. This vision was translated into technical terms by Commissioner Thierry Breton, who quickly announced the implementation of this agenda in terms of technological sovereignty<sup>53</sup>. On the other hand, the COVID-19 health crisis called into question the continuity of supply relationships with China<sup>54</sup>. First, there was an interruption in production due to the epidemic, then an awareness of the dependence on China for a series of products that now appear to be strategic, such as healthcare goods. Second, this cyclical problem of sourcing from China has reinforced suspicion not only of Chinese technologies but also of the structural conditions of trade with China, while Chinese producers are often accused of having duplicated Western technologies by not respecting intellectual property rules, a form of unfair competition<sup>55</sup>. Consequently, the COVID-19 health crisis has appeared to be a catalyst for these critical perceptions.

The impression that emerges is that the COVID-19 health crisis has brought to the forefront the necessity of Brussels not relying on extra-European supply for critical technologies, in order to avoid any form of technological shortage, able to cut off access to essential technologies for the European economy and society. In this context, the adoption of the EU Chips Act in July 2023<sup>56</sup>

49. The Guardian. MEPs to vote on proposed ban on 'Big Brother' AI facial recognition on streets. Mai 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/10/meps-to-vote-on-proposed-ban-on-big-brother-ai-facial-recognition-on-streets>

50. Kelvin Chan. How Europe is building artificial intelligence guardrails. The Economist. May 2023. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/european-union-ap-european-parliament-europe-london-b2336785.html>

51. Arthur Olivier. Intelligence artificielle : que fait l'Union européenne ?. Toute l'Europe. Juin 2023. <https://www.touteurope.eu/economie-et-social/intelligence-artificielle-que-fait-l-union-europeenne/>

52. Jean-Pierre Darnis. European technological sovereignty: a response to the Covid-19 crisis? Foundation for Strategic Research. Note45/20. 2020. 2020. <https://www.frstrategie.org/en/publications/notes/european-technological-sovereignty-response-covid-19-crisis-2020>

53. Anne Rovan. A Bruxelles, Thierry Breton prend ses marques au pas de charge. Le Figaro. 2019. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/a-bruxelles-thierry-breton-prend-ses-marques-au-pas-de-charge-20191219>

54. Jean-Pierre Darnis. European technological sovereignty: a response to the Covid-19 crisis? Foundation for Strategic Research. Note45/20. 2020. 2020. <https://www.frstrategie.org/en/publications/notes/european-technological-sovereignty-response-covid-19-crisis-2020>

55. Jean-Pierre Darnis. European technological sovereignty: a response to the Covid-19 crisis? Foundation for Strategic Research. Note45/20. 2020. 2020. <https://www.frstrategie.org/en/publications/notes/european-technological-sovereignty-response-covid-19-crisis-2020>

56. Official Journal of the European Union. Regulation (EU) 2023/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/694 (Chips Act). September 2023. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023R1781>

illustrated the Europeanisation of the issue of technological sovereignty. The main purpose of the act is to ensure the EU's supply of semiconductors, which are essential in many technologies, such as cars and smartphones. "During the health crisis, 45% of our supply chains were exposed to chips shortages, leading to price increases for both industries and consumers"<sup>57</sup>, highlighted the European Parliament rapporteur of the text, Dan Nica (Socialists & Democrats group), during discussions preceding the vote on the law in question in the European Parliament. These components are indeed predominantly produced in Asia and the United States. The text therefore provides for an alert mechanism to implement emergency measures, such as joint procurement among the twenty-seven, or supply of products affected by the shortage<sup>58</sup>. The Chips Act also aims to strengthen the European industrial fabric in the long term, by opening the way to a wave of subsidies aimed at relocating the production of these electronic chips to Europe<sup>59</sup>. It aims to enable the EU to represent 20% of the global chips value chain by 2030, whereas currently it only accounts for 9% of the global market<sup>60</sup>. In this context, €3.3 billion from European funds will be allocated to research and innovation in this field<sup>61</sup>. Finally, the last pillar of this text aims to strengthen commercial partnerships with other countries. The Chips Act which has allowed Brussels to now adopt an interventionist industrial policy in a continent traditionally very open to global competition<sup>62</sup>, is part of the EU's efforts to assert its technological sovereignty.

#### 4. The new-generation free trade agreements as pillar of the new EU trade policy

Free trade is a cornerstone of the EU's trade policy. It not only stimulates the European economy by facilitating access to foreign markets for European businesses, but also strengthens economic and political relations with its trading partners. Launched with the Treaty of Rome in 1957, European trade policy expanded significantly in the late 2000s. Globalization has certainly driven European companies to invest increasingly in and trade with other countries. However, the paralysis of the World Trade Organization (WTO) during the first decade of this century, and the protectionist turn of the U.S. under President Donald Trump from 2017 to 2021, illustrated by the non-progression of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP/TAFTA) between the EU and the U.S., and more recently by the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), have led the EU to question the nature of its trade relations with its most traditional partner. Furthermore, critics have even accused Brussels of negotiating its free trade agreements in opacity, of lowering European standards, such as the precautionary principle, of endangering certain jobs, especially in agriculture, and even of undermining the democratic functioning of EU countries by allowing businesses to challenge national legislation<sup>63</sup>. These internal and external factors have pushed the EU, particularly the European Commission, tasked with conducting trade negotiations, to rethink its trade policy. It is in this context that the expression 'new-generation free trade agreement' began to be used in the

57. Juliette Verdes. Semi-conducteurs : le Parlement européen adopte le 'Chips Act'. Toute l'Europe. July 2023. <https://www.touteleurope.eu/economie-et-social/semi-conducteurs-le-parlement-europeen-adopte-sa-position-sur-le-chips-act/>

58. Naomi O'Leary. EU greenlights €3.3bn funding to develop microchip industry amid global scramble. The Irish Times. April 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2023/04/18/eu-green-light-33-billion-funding-for-microchip-industry/>

59. Pieter Haeck. EU legislators strike deal on €43B chips plan. Politico. April 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-legislator-strike-deal-e43-billion-plan-boost-chips-production/>

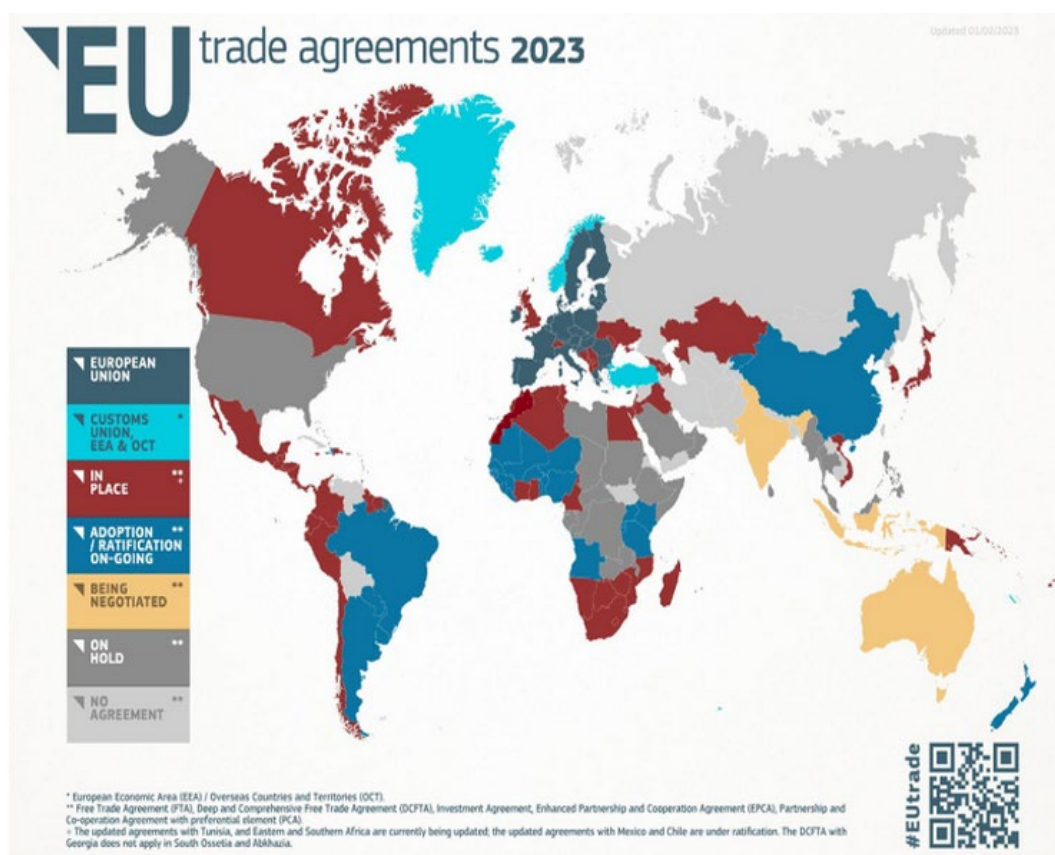
60. Ibid.

61. Euronews. EU Chips Act: Leaders strike €43 billion deal to boost semiconductor production in Europe. April 2023. <https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/04/19/eu-strikes-deal-to-boost-semiconductor-chip-production>

62. France 24. EU reaches deal to boost chip production in bid to reduce dependence on Asian suppliers. April 2023. <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230418-eu-reaches-deal-to-boost-chip-production-in-bid-to-reduce-dependence-on-asian-suppliers>

63. Vincent Lequeux. Les accords européens de libre-échange en 3 minutes. Toute l'Europe. March 2024. <https://www.touteleurope.eu/economie-et-social/les-accords-europeens-de-libre-echange-en-3-minutes/>

EU during free trade agreement negotiations.



New-generation free trade agreements differ from traditional free trade agreements in three ways. First, while traditional free trade agreements aim to reduce tariffs between states to promote trade, new-generation free trade agreements also seek to reduce other barriers to trade, including non-tariff obstacles. In other words, new-generation free trade agreements also cover services, public procurement, and intellectual property protection. The agreement between the EU and Canada (CETA), which provisionally entered into force in 2017, for example recognizes 145 protected European appellations in Canada and opens Canadian public procurement markets to European companies. These provisions are also found in agreements concluded with Japan (JEFTA), and with Mercosur (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay), initially signed in June 2019 but not yet implemented. Indeed, South American leaders want to relax the environmental requirements of the future free trade agreement with the EU<sup>64</sup>.

Second, new-generation free trade agreements also aim at harmonizing standards, whether they are sanitary, social, technical, or environmental. For instance, CETA includes a process allowing an increasing number of European and Canadian regulations to be recognized as equivalent. In this scenario, a European company wishing to export its products to Canada can have them certified for compliance once within the EU territory.

Finally, a mechanism for resolving disputes between investors and states, often referred to as an

64. Jaime Rosemberg. Los cuatro presidentes del Mercosur se reúnen por primera vez en cuatro años en medio de la incertidumbre por el acuerdo con la Unión Europea. La Nación. July 2023. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/politica/los-cuatro-presidentes-del-mercursosur-se-reunen-por-primera-vez-en-cuatro-anos-en-medio-de-la-nid02072023/>

‘arbitration tribunal’ or ‘investment protection agreement’, is commonly included in these trade treaties. This bilateral instrument adjudicates disputes between one of the parties to the agreement (a state or the EU) and a company that claims to have suffered damages due to government decisions, such as new environmental legislation. Initially planned in CETA, this mechanism was reformed following civil society protests and, in line with decisions from the EU Court of Justice, now requires separate treaties to be ratified by all national parliaments.

## 5. The Limitations of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Migration is increasingly central to the European debate, further reinforced by the rise of far-right parties and populist movements that have made migration their Trojan horse. The EU adopted in April 2024 the European Pact on Migration and Asylum<sup>65</sup> to replace the 2015 Dublin agreements as the new dominant paradigm in EU migration policy. The package consists of a set of ten texts, nine regulations and one directive, aimed at strengthening the fight against illegal immigration and accelerating the return of persons in irregular situations. The text provides for a new border-screening procedure in the EU, aiming to identify within seven days whether the applicant should quickly undergo a return procedure or whether their asylum application should go through an accelerated process<sup>66</sup>. This is particularly relevant when less than 20% of nationals from their country typically receive asylum within the EU, otherwise they undergo a normal procedure<sup>67</sup>. The Pact also aims to create more solidarity among member states by creating a mandatory solidarity mechanism to prevent the concentration of asylum seekers in certain countries, notably Italy and Greece<sup>68</sup>. Less-exposed states can choose to host some of these asylum seekers or assist the host country in various ways<sup>69</sup>. Furthermore, the legislative package includes a specific mechanism for managing migratory crises, harmonization of reception conditions, and an expansion of the Eurodac database<sup>70</sup>.

With its external dimension, the Pact also promotes collaboration with third countries in migration management by building on current EU migration partnership frameworks. It aims to strengthen international partnerships to ensure effective returns, combat migrant trafficking more effectively, and develop legal migration pathways. This approach is part of the EU’s broader strategy of externalizing migration policies to third countries through agreements for readmission and development aid in exchange for stricter border controls<sup>71</sup>. This strategy aligns with the Jordanian and Lebanese Compacts, the EU-Turkey Agreement, and readmission agreements signed with countries in the region<sup>72</sup>. In this regard, Brussels prioritizes, within the framework of the new migration pact, the return of migrants by promising access to European visas for states that accept their repatriated nationals. Conversely, countries that are reluctant would face sanctions through a less-generous visa policy. However, such a practice in managing the migration issue risks damaging the EU’s relations with its southern neighbors, especially Africa, given that 80% of migration within

65. Migration and Asylum Pact. European Council. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/eu-migration-asylum-reform-pact/>

66. Barthélémy Gaillard. Qu’est-ce que le Pacte européen sur la migration et l’asile ? Toute l’Europe. May 2024. <https://www.touteleurope.eu/l-ue-dans-le-monde/que-contient-le-pacte-europeen-sur-la-migration-et-l-asile/>

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Carmine Conte and Başak Yavcan. Reflection Paper on the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Migration Policy Group. <https://www.migpolgroup.com/index.php/2024/04/23/reflection-paper-on-the-new-eu-pact-on-migration-and-asylum/>

71. Carmine Conte and Başak Yavcan. Reflection Paper on the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Migration Policy Group. <https://www.migpolgroup.com/index.php/2024/04/23/reflection-paper-on-the-new-eu-pact-on-migration-and-asylum/>

72. Ibid.

Africa the continent is intra-African, with only 20% being extra-African<sup>73</sup>.

The migratory crisis engulfing the EU necessitates efficient articulation of North-South cooperation logics, advocating for an intelligible and inclusive migratory approach that values complementarity and avoids brain drain. The idea of a Brain Drain Tax, conceived by the Indo-American economist Jagdish Bhagwati during the 1970s, which involves taxing skilled migrants settled in host countries for five years and redirecting the proceeds to their countries of origin, could be relevant<sup>74</sup>. An alternative approach involves requiring young African graduates who have pursued higher education in Europe to work for a few years in their home countries on completing their studies. It's worth noting that technological hubs such as Bangalore in India and Silicon Wadi in Israel have thrived by encouraging diaspora entrepreneurs return home from Europe and Silicon Valley. Similarly, the high-tech megalopolis of Shenzhen in China has seen similar success. In Africa, the Ghanaian perspective is intriguing, exemplified by Google opening an AI-focused R&D center in Accra. These examples demonstrate that migration can be turned into an opportunity for both Africa and Europe, transforming Brain Drain into Brain Gain.

## 6. The European Geopolitical Transition Tested by Divergence Between the Franco-German Couple

While the COVID-19 pandemic and the turbulent economic relations with the Trump Administration pushed the EU to seriously consider the projects of digital transition and technological sovereignty, Brexit and the war in Ukraine, on the other hand, have accelerated the European geopolitical transition, even a painful but salutary "geopolitical awakening" in the words of the former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell<sup>75</sup>. The Versailles Declaration, adopted in March 2022 in the wake of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which aims to equip the EU with the tools of hard power, represented a key moment in the European geopolitical transition<sup>76</sup>. Indeed, the Versailles Declaration defined the contours of a European geopolitical sovereignty structured around two major axes: energy autonomy from Russia and strategic autonomy from the United States.

About the energy autonomy, the drastic reduction in Russian hydrocarbon imports by Europeans has particularly highlighted their energy dependence and, consequently, their vulnerability. It has made the diversification of their supply sources and the reduction of their consumption in this area even more urgent<sup>77</sup>. Furthermore, the war in Ukraine has thus been perceived as a confirmation of the imperative necessity for the EU, if it seriously aspires to the status of a power, to find by itself and ideally within itself the resources of all kinds necessary for its proper functioning<sup>78</sup>. This is a realization that is not without consequences, particularly in relation to the issue of EU enlargement. This is how German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, in a speech in Prague on August 29, 2022, advocated for the prospect of an EU with 36 member states by the end of the century. For Berlin, in order for the EU to reduce its dependencies on the rest of the world and to be better able to pursue a

73. Paul Akiwumi. Common misconceptions about African migration? UN Trade and Development. June 2018. <https://unctad.org/fr/isar/news/common-misconceptions-about-african-migration>

74. Jagdish Bhagwati. Taxing the Brain Drain. Volume 19. Numéro 13.1976.

75. Josep Borell. L'Europe dans l'interregne : notre réveil géopolitique après l'Ukraine. Le Grand Continent. March 2022. <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2022/03/24/europe-dans-linterregne-notre-reveil-geopolitique-apres-lukraine/>

76. Arthur Olivier. Au sommet de Versailles, les Vingt-Sept défendent une souveraineté européenne. Toute l'Europe. March 2022. <https://www.touteurope.eu/l-ue-dans-le-monde/au-sommet-de-versailles-les-vingt-sept-defendent-une-souverainete-europeenne/>

77. Florian Louis. La transition géopolitique européenne. Le Grand Continent. September 2022. <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2022/09/01/la-transition-geopolitique-europeenne/>

78. Ibid.

policy of sovereign power, it has every interest in acquiring a territory that is sufficiently vast, rich, and varied to be able to find within itself what it would prefer not to be forced to obtain from others, thus avoiding being at their mercy<sup>79</sup>. The energy reorientation undertaken at Versailles has occurred through a forced diversification of European supply sources, which constitutes one of the three pillars of the RepowerEU plan, aiming to achieve energy independence<sup>80</sup>. Europeans, for instance, have increasingly turned to Norway, the United States, and Qatar for gas supply, amidst sharply rising prices and a predominant focus on supply-security objectives<sup>81</sup>. In terms of sovereignty, the main benefit of this diversification lies in ending excessive dependency on a single partner, thereby reducing Europeans' strategic vulnerability. Similarly, doubling the use of liquefied natural gas (from 20% to 40%) is seen as more easily substitutable than pipeline-delivered gas.<sup>82</sup>

## EU Energy Imports from Russia

	2021	2023
Oil	27%	6%
Natural gas	50%	8%
Coal	46%	0%

In terms of strategic autonomy, the adoption of economic sanctions against Moscow following its military offensive in Ukraine has demonstrated that the EU remains for now merely a geo-economic power, rather than a geopolitical power, still strategically and militarily dependent on the United States. When it comes to constraining or protecting markets, companies, or consumers, the EU is comfortable. However, Brussels appears much less agile when it comes to defending territories<sup>83</sup>. This imbalance between the geo-economic power and the geopolitical power of the EU, which significantly undermines European strength, is even more damaging given one of the lessons of the Ukraine war: that geo-economics holds little weight compared to geopolitics. It is indeed evident that, as is almost always the case, economic sanctions have not achieved the desired result intended by their initiators, namely, to deter Russia from its offensive in Ukraine<sup>84</sup>. Thus, just days after the Versailles summit, Europeans adopted a 'Strategic Compass' aimed at enhancing security and defense in Europe by 2030<sup>85</sup>. This is based on a shared diagnosis of challenges and threats, along with an inventory of various tools to be mobilized toward this goal. In July 2022, the Commission introduced an instrument to strengthen the European defense industry through joint procurement (EDIRPA), aimed at addressing the most critical gaps and providing financial incentives for member states to jointly acquire defense products<sup>86</sup>.

79. Florian Louis. La transition géopolitique européenne. Le Grand Continent. September 2022. <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2022/09/01/la-transition-geopolitique-europeenne/>

80. Yves Bertoncini. Quelle "souveraineté européenne" après la déclaration de Versailles ? Robert Schuman Foundation. October 2023. <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/questions-d-europe/721-quelle-souverainete-europeenne-apres-la-declaration-de-versailles>

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Florian Louis. La transition géopolitique européenne. Le Grand Continent. September 2022. <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2022/09/01/la-transition-geopolitique-europeenne/>

84. Ibid.

85. Yves Bertoncini. Quelle "souveraineté européenne" après la déclaration de Versailles ? Robert Schuman Foundation. October 2023. <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/questions-d-europe/721-quelle-souverainete-europeenne-apres-la-declaration-de-versailles>

86. Ibid.



## European Common Defense Financial Efforts 2021-27 (in € billions)

	2021	2023
European Defense Fund	7,953	7,953 (1)
European Peace Facility (support military and defense actions)	5,692	12
Procuring together defense capabilities (PTDC)	...	0,3 (2)
Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP)	...	0,5 (2)

The recent doctrinal and capacity-building progress that has been observed reflects a growing awareness of the need to strengthen EU defense capabilities. However, nearly two years since the adoption of the Versailles Declaration, which defined the principles of European geopolitics, the European geopolitical transition appears more than ever to suffer from a fundamental ambiguity, namely disagreements between the Franco-German couple, which constitute the cornerstone of European integration on geopolitical objectives. While Paris advocates for establishing a geopolitically autonomous and sovereign Europe capable of influencing global geopolitical balances, Berlin supports a geopolitical Europe within the framework of NATO.

These divergences have come to the forefront in the fields of energy and defense. In the energy sector, Germany's stance on the energy crisis that hit EU countries hard in the aftermath of the Ukraine war has irked some Europeans. Berlin adopted a plan of €200 billion to mitigate the effects of gas-price increases on German consumers and businesses, but did so without consulting its European partners, leading to frustration in Paris<sup>87</sup>. In military matters, Germany also made a 180-degree turn to modernize its army<sup>88</sup>, but without working towards strengthening European strategic autonomy<sup>89</sup>. Its decision to allocate the majority of the €100 billion it pledged for the purchase of American equipment comes at the expense of the growth of a European defense industry. The main point of contention concerns the European missile shield project proposed by the German chancellor at the end of August 2022. Paris perceived it as a provocation that the federal government advanced the plan without French participation, while involving London, which had left the EU, and betting on Israeli technology, despite similar systems being developed by France and Italy. The impression that emerges is that the long march towards a geopolitical Europe is still fraught with obstacles.

87. Hans Von Der Burchard and Clea Caulcutt. The awkward lunch: Macron snubs Scholz in Paris. Politico. October 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/olaf-scholz-emmanuel-macron-meet-amid-tensions-energy-crisis-defense/>

88. Les Echos. Macron et Scholz vont tenter de faire repartir le moteur franco-allemand. October 2022. <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/macron-et-scholz-vont-tenter-de-faire-repartir-le-moteur-franco-allemand-1872966>

89. Jean Quatremer. Crise énergétique, Union européenne... Entre Paris et Berlin, le coup de frein. Libération. October 2022. <https://www.liberation.fr/international/europe/crise-energetique-union-europeenne-entre-paris-et-berlin-le-coup-de-frein-202210>

## CONCLUSION

The European elections of 2024 resulted in the stabilization of the traditional right and left, alongside a decline of the liberals and Greens, and an upsurge of sovereigntists. After the battle of the European elections, the key positions in the EU were renewed, by responding to a balance both geographically and politically, according to the results of the European elections. In this perspective, during the summit of European heads of state and government on June 27, 2024, Ursula von der Leyen was reappointed as the President of the European Commission. Estonian Kaja Kallas is set to take charge of European diplomacy, while Portuguese António Costa will preside over the European Council for the next 2.5 years. These selections respect the political balance among the three main political families at the center of the European political spectrum, namely the EPP (European People's Party), Social Democrats, and Liberal-Centrists. Now that the top European jobs have been assigned, the 10th legislature of the Parliament, stemming from the 2024 elections, will officially take office on July 16, during which the Parliament will elect its new bureau by secret ballot in accordance with the internal regulations.

The 2024 European elections took place at a time when the outgoing executive and legislative branches had initiated numerous transitions capable of changing the face of Europe, in a world undergoing significant reconfigurations. In the aftermath of the elections, the EU is at a crossroads, and the months ahead will be critical for its internal dynamics and international positioning. With the defeat of the Greens and the decline of liberals, the progressive push over the past five years that brought about the Green Deal could come to an end. The sovereigntists are expected to push back on climate and green-transition agendas. Cooperation with parts of the moderate-right could continue on a restrictive migration policy within the framework of the recent European Pact on Migration and Asylum, while calls for a Europe of sovereign nation states will get louder in the coming term to the detriment of the European geopolitical transition. In several aspects, the priorities of the European Parliament (2024-2029) are likely to differ from those of the previous European legislature.

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## *About Policy Center for the New South*

The Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) is a Moroccan think tank aiming to contribute to the improvement of economic and social public policies that challenge Morocco and the rest of Africa as integral parts of the global South.

The PCNS pleads for an open, accountable and enterprising "new South" that defines its own narratives and mental maps around the Mediterranean and South Atlantic basins, as part of a forward-looking relationship with the rest of the world. Through its analytical endeavours, the think tank aims to support the development of public policies in Africa and to give the floor to experts from the South. This stance is focused on dialogue and partnership, and aims to cultivate African expertise and excellence needed for the accurate analysis of African and global challenges and the suggestion of appropriate solutions.

As such, the PCNS brings together researchers, publishes their work and capitalizes on a network of renowned partners, representative of different regions of the world. The PCNS hosts a series of gatherings of different formats and scales throughout the year, the most important being the annual international conferences "The Atlantic Dialogues" and "African Peace and Security Annual Conference" (APSACO).

Finally, the think tank is developing a community of young leaders through the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders program (ADEL) a space for cooperation and networking between a new generation of decision-makers from the government, business and civil society sectors. Through this initiative, which already counts more than 300 members, the Policy Center for the New South contributes to intergenerational dialogue and the emergence of tomorrow's leaders.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Abdessalam Saad Jaldi** is a Professor of Law at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P) and a Senior International Relations Specialist at the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS), focusing on the Maghreb, EU, France, India, and new tendencies of international law. He is currently affiliated with the G20 Brazil as a core member of a task force examining the voices of the Global South in global governance and strengthening multilateralism. He has over ten years of experience working in multilateral, non-profit, social research, academic sectors, and democracy building. He holds a Ph.D. in Law from the University of Strasbourg. A native of Casablanca, Morocco, he is fluent in English, French, and Arabic.

## Policy Center for the New South

Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Rocade Rabat-Salé, 11103  
Email : [contact@policycenter.ma](mailto:contact@policycenter.ma)  
Phone : +212 (0) 537 54 04 04 / Fax : +212 (0) 537 71 31 54  
Website : [www.policycenter.ma](http://www.policycenter.ma)

