

The  
**Whitehouse**  
Consultancy

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# EUROPEAN ELECTION MANIFESTOS

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# What can we expect in 2019-2024?

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On 23rd-26th May 2019, EU citizens will cast their votes on who they want to represent them in the next European Parliament. There will be 751 seats up for grabs divided over the 28 Member States. The elections are contested by national political parties, but once Members of the European Parliament are elected, most join a transnational political group. These European parties bring together like-minded politicians in the European Parliament to exert greater political influence on EU policymaking.

The Lisbon Treaty adopted in 2009 boosted the European Parliament's position among the EU institutions. Aside from increasing its legislative power, the European Parliament and in particular the election of its MEPs now impacts the course taken by the EU's executive, the European Commission. The Treaty states that EU leaders must take into account the result of the European elections when nominating a candidate for the presidency of the European Commission. This has led to the so-called "Spitzenkandidaten" process, whereby European political groups present a lead candidate in the campaign and the candidate of the group receiving the most votes becomes the next President of the European Commission.

This EP-level alliance forming aims to take the political debates from the national to the European level and has encouraged European political parties to focus more on European issues and policies. Their ideas are laid down in party manifestos, which are promoted across the bloc by the Spitzenkandidaten during the election campaign. These manifestos provide insights into what direction each bloc hope to take the EU after the elections, and what businesses may expect in terms of future policymaking.

The Whitehouse Consultancy has analysed the different European party manifestos and outlined key areas for businesses to take into account in the next legislative term.



**Viviana Spaghetti**  
*Director - EU Affairs*

**The Whitehouse Consultancy**





# EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY



# European People's Party



Current seats:

**217**



Expected seats:

**171**



Spitzenkandidat:

**Manfred Webber** (GER)



Manifesto:

**'Let's open the next chapter for Europe together'**

The European People's Party (EPP) brings together the Christian Democratic parties across the EU. It is projected to retain its position as largest group in the European Parliament, although it is likely to lose quite a few seats. In cooperation with the Social Democrats, the EPP has been able to push through a lot of legislation over the past five years. With the social democrats also expected to lose seats, the EPP will likely have to form new alliances after the elections to retain a majority for its legislative plans. At the same time, the party is also facing internal struggles, having recently suspended its Hungarian member, Fidesz, over alleged violations of EU rule of law principles. Keeping party unity while exploring possibilities of working with either left or far-right parties might pose a challenge.

The EPP emphasises the need for Member States to work together on issues such as migration, terrorism, globalisation and climate change. It argues that neither populists nor the left parties and the Greens are well equipped to deal with the challenges the EU is facing today. Its investment strategy will focus on three pillars: the social market economy, human-centred innovations, and the maintenance of the competitiveness of all regions.

**Please see the following pages for a more detailed overview of what the EPP's plans are in specific sectors:**



## European People's Party

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

The EPP wants the EU to become a global leader in combatting climate change. Defending the Paris Climate Agreement, it aims to focus on an economic policy that will allow the EU to innovate and foster clean technologies.

- ★ Introducing an effective price on CO2 with a well-functioning emission trading system
- ★ Enabling investments and innovation on solutions to low-carbon mobility, with a particular focus on self-driving vehicles and connected mobility solutions
- ★ Completing the Energy Union, supporting the expansion of renewable energies
- ★ Opening up the circular economy, increasing recycling, reusing, and repairing

### PUBLIC HEALTH

In terms of public health threats, the EPP hopes to focus particularly on tackling challenges related to the ageing population, antimicrobial resistance and chronic and infectious diseases. More specifically, it proposes to:

- ★ Support innovation and investments in health
- ★ Develop a silver economy to encourage active ageing
- ★ Support delivering telemedicine to rural communities
- ★ Create a European Master Plan to collect resources and data to find a cure for cancer

## European People's Party

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### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

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The EPP wishes to adopt a forward-looking strategy for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that should be well-funded. The aim is to maintain farmers' competitiveness and make their production more sustainable. To achieve this, the EPP suggests the following actions:

- ★ Modernising the CAP to help family farms face challenges such as climate change and globalisation
- ★ Introducing more digital solutions and simplifying administrative procedures in order to cut red tape
- ★ Ensuring food, fisheries and agricultural standards are preserved and protected against low-quality imports and tackling dual food quality

### DIGITAL AND DIGITALISATION

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In terms of public health threats, the EPP hopes to focus particularly on tackling challenges related to the ageing population, antimicrobial resistance and chronic and infectious diseases.

More specifically, it also suggests:

- ★ Investing in artificial intelligence and robotics
- ★ Building a new European University Institute 4.0 for the latest technological innovations
- ★ Introducing a Digital Fair Tax to finance digital infrastructure and future investments
- ★ Fighting fake news by ensuring social platforms increase fact-checking efforts in cooperation with journalists
- ★ Introducing digital tools to cut bureaucracy for SMEs
- ★ Modernising legislation to accommodate technological changes





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# PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALISTS & DEMOCRATS

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# Socialists & Democrats

 Current seats:  
**186**

 Expected seats:  
**151**

 Spitzenkandidat:  
**Frans Timmermans** (NE)

 Manifesto:  
**'A New Social Contract for Europe'**

The Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D) is currently the second biggest group in the European Parliament. In accordance with national election trends in the EU, the socialists are expected to lose some seats. More recent national elections, however, have seen centre-left groups winning ground, including in Spain and Finland. Led by Frans Timmermans, who served as First Vice President of the European Commission over the last five years, the social democrats hope to regain their momentum ahead of the elections and maintain their political power in the institutions in the next legislative term.

The S&D want to focus their efforts on reducing inequality across the bloc. This includes ensuring strong welfare states with social security and quality public services. They will work to achieve a ban on zero-hours contracts and implementing a minimum wage across Europe. To ensure fair labour mobility across the EU, the S&D wants to strengthen the European Labour Authority, which should focus on tackling social dumping. They also suggest a common approach to taxation to combat tax evasion and avoidance. Under such a scheme, profits will then be taxed where they are generated. Furthermore, the S&D wants to focus investments on research and innovation, green transition and the digital revolution.

**Please see the following pages for a more detailed overview of what the S&D's plans are in specific sectors:**



## Socialists & Democrats

### ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

The S&D wants the EU to become a leader in tackling climate change and supporting the environment. Their aim is to make the EU carbon-neutral by 2050. It suggests the following actions to achieve this:

- ★ Adopting a Sustainable Development Pact that includes social and ecological targets to balance environmental and economic interests
- ★ Setting up a Just Transition Fund to implement the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals by 2030
- ★ Encouraging the industry to use renewable and clean energy by posing an EU-wide tax on CO2 emissions
- ★ Promoting a Plan for Affordable Housing and Clean Public Transport in Europe that aims to provide affordable and energy efficient housing to citizens

### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

The S&D aims to make agriculture and food production more sustainable. It wishes to achieve this by taking the following actions:

- ★ Fighting water poverty and ensuring access to healthy and high-quality food
- ★ Tackling the exposure to toxic chemicals
- ★ Reforming the EU's agricultural policy so it encourages sustainable production methods, less food waste, better nutrition and the protection of biodiversity





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# EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES & REFORMISTS

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# Conservatives & Reformists

 Current seats:  
**76**

 Expected seats:  
**57**

 Spitzenkandidat:  
**Jan Zahradil** (CZE)

 Manifesto:  
**'Retune the EU'**

The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) is currently the third largest group in the European Parliament. Polls suggest the group will lose this position, which can be partly attributed to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The UK's Conservative Party forms the basis of this political group, meaning that upon the UK's withdrawal, the ECR will lose a large part of its members. Even if the UK does participate in the European Parliament elections, the Conservative Party is expected to lose many seats. It is therefore possible that ECR members will decide to revise its affiliations, particularly considering the expected rise of other eurocritical parties.

The ECR's party manifesto is much revolved around Spitzenkandidat Jan Zahradil. He aims to scale back the EU and put the focus back on Member States. As President of the European Commission, he would reassess the EU's treaties and laws by means of a

"Great Review". If case new legislation is necessary, Mr Zahradil passing recommendations to the European Council, where Member States can decide unanimously on how to move forward. He wants to create a scene whereby Member States can cooperate on issues that matter to them and are not forced into a level of integration that does not suit them. Areas where he feels the EU can be of added value are research, the single market and trade.

**Please see the following pages for a more detailed overview of what the ECR's plans are in specific sectors:**

## Conservatives & Reformists

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### ENERGY

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The ECR wants to ensure the EU adopts a coordinated approach on energy security.

The aim is to diversify energy supplies, thereby reducing the EU's dependency on Russia.

It proposes to achieve this by:

- ★ Stopping Member States' commitment to energy projects, such as the Nordstream II, the gas pipeline connecting EU countries directly with Russia

### TRADE

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The ECR considers the single market to be one of the most important successes of the EU.

It wants to make sure that the EU focuses on creating the right economic conditions and not on creating an EU-wide social security scheme. To achieve this, Mr Zahradil suggests to:

- ★ Sign ten more free trade agreements, similar to the EU-Japan deal that was negotiated recently, by 2024, with a focus on Asia, Africa and Latin America
- ★ Complete the single market by opening the service market
- ★ Avoid the harmonisation of taxes, as well as the creation of social and health care systems





# ALLIANCE OF LIBERALS & DEMOCRATS



# Alliance of Liberals & Democrats



Current seats:

**68**



Expected seats:

**97**



Spitzenkandidat:

**"Team Europe"**  
(See below)



Manifesto:

**Freedom, opportunity, prosperity: the liberal vision for the future of Europe**

*"Team Europe", consisting of Nicola Beer (Germany), Emma Bonino (Italy), Violeta Bulc (Slovenia), Katalin Cseh (Hungary), Luis Garicano (Spain), Guy Verhofstadt (Belgium) and Margrethe Vestager (Denmark)*

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) is projected to see a small increase in seats and hopes to become the third biggest party in the European Parliament. This will mainly depend on French President Emmanuel Macron's decision on whether or not to have his LREM party join forces with the ALDE or cooperate with other political groups. With LREM expected to gain 21 seats, this decision will make a big difference to the ALDE's political weight in the European Parliament.

In its manifesto, the ALDE emphasises the need for a united European approach to address global challenges. It wishes to reform the institutions to make the EU more effective and harness globalisation. It strongly condemns protectionism and defends rule-based and free trade underpinned by the World Trade Organisation. In terms of budgetary priorities, the focus of the ALDE will lie in investments in innovation and research, technological change, security, tackling climate change and youth unemployment.

**Please see the following pages for a more detailed overview of what the ALDE's plans are in specific sectors:**

## Alliance of Liberals & Democrats

### TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL

The ALDE aims to achieve a fully functioning digital single market. A number of actions are proposed to achieve this:

- ★ Investing 3% of the EU GDP in research and innovation by 2020
- ★ Encouraging competition among companies and preventing monopolies
- ★ Abolishing geo-blocking
- ★ Harmonising data protection policies
- ★ Guaranteeing free access to information by removing upload filters and censorship infrastructures
- ★ Creating a legal framework for new technologies, including blockchain and artificial intelligence, focusing mainly on applications
- ★ Making digital the solution for public services

### ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

The ALDE wants to make the EU a carbon neutral economy by 2050. It wants the EU to lead the way in transitioning to a resource-efficient circular economy and achieving the Paris Agreement goals.

The ALDE proposes taking the following actions in this regard:

- ★ Completing the European Energy Union
- ★ Investing in research in low emission technologies, infrastructure (particularly railroads) and clean energy production
- ★ Strengthening the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and extending it to cover other sectors, including transport
- ★ Ending fuel tax exemptions for international aviation by updating the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation
- ★ As an intermediate step, reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels



## Alliance of Liberals & Democrats

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### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

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The ALDE wishes to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to make it more modern and sustainable. In particular, it suggests taking the following actions:

- ★ Reforming the agricultural subsidies by making them more transparent and equal
- ★ Creating incentives to innovate and make farming more sustainable
- ★ Linking agricultural policy to other challenges, including antimicrobial resistance and food security
- ★ Fighting against renationalising agricultural policy



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# GREENS / EUROPEAN FREE ALLIANCE

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# Greens/European Free Alliance



Current seats:

**52**



Expected seats:

**54**



Spitzenkandidat:

**Bas Eickhout** (NDL)  
**Ska Keller** (GER)



Manifesto:

**'Time to renew the  
promise of Europe'**

The Greens are expected to get their best ever result in the European Parliament elections, potentially winning 57 seats. Support for this group has risen across the continent with growing discontent about traditional social democratic parties and increasing concerns from voters about climate change. For the first time, the Greens may be called upon to join mainstream parties to form an alliance of pro-European forces, in light of the rise of far-right parties. Spitzenkandidat Bas Eickhout, however, has been clear that he would only agree to work with the EPP (expected to win the most votes) if it stopped supporting “illiberal democracies” in Hungary and Austria and changed its course on rule of law and social policy.

The Greens have put forward a progressive party manifesto that focuses on change. They highlight that EU cooperation is valuable in achieving certain goals, such as reducing poverty, creating jobs, fighting climate change and tackling discrimination. Its focus is heavily put on environmental and public health, including investing in renewable energy and banning harmful pesticides. It also highlights the importance of equality and the need to tackle the powers of big corporations. The Greens will use the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as a basis for all EU internal and external policies.

**Please see the following pages for a more detailed overview of what The Greens' plans are in specific sectors:**

## Greens/European Free Alliance

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### ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

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Protecting the environment is one the Greens' main priorities. They want to work towards transitioning to a sustainable society by greening the economy and taking measures to fight climate change. The Paris Climate Agreement will be used as a basis to formulate policies. More specifically, the Greens propose to:

- ★ Introduce a European climate law to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and to build a zero emissions economy
- ★ Increase international climate funding and introduce a border-tax for countries outside the EU that refuse to limit emissions
- ★ Introduce a carbon-floor price in the emissions trading system
- ★ Set tighter limits on air pollution
- ★ Introduce bigger sanctions on illegal logging
- ★ Increase marine protected areas to 20% of seas outside the EU that refuse to limit emissions
- ★ Introduce a ban or tax on non-recyclable plastic
- ★ Place a tax on the extraction an import of raw materials



## Greens/European Free Alliance

### ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

With their energy policy, the Greens want to invest in sustainable solutions, such as energy efficiency schemes and ecological transport. They wish to:

- ★ Stop all financing to fossil fuel projects
- ★ Phase out coal by 2030 and gas as soon as possible
- ★ Stop fracking and investments in nuclear power
- ★ Set tighter limits on air pollution
- ★ Invest in railways
- ★ Ensure all trucks, vans, trains, ships and planes become zero-emission vehicles
- ★ Introduce a European flight tax and end the kerosene tax exemption for airplanes
- ★ Ban fossil fuel cars after 2030

### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

The Greens want to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to move from industrial agriculture to more sustainable forms of farming, including organic and ecological solutions. Their aim is to provide consumers with more sustainable and healthy food options. More specifically, the Greens want to:

- ★ Redirect subsidies to sustainable farming
- ★ Ban pesticides, including glyphosate
- ★ Compensate domestic producers for adopting high environmental and public health standards
- ★ Introduce more stringent rules on food labelling, including information on how a food is produced
- ★ Reduce meat consumption and promote plant-based diets
- ★ End deep-sea trawling and introduce fishing seasonal closures

# Greens/European Free Alliance

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## **DIGITAL AND DIGITALISATION**

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The Greens want to complete the single market and seize opportunities of digitisation, artificial intelligence and robotisation. To tackle the challenges related to the technological revolution, they propose to:

- ★ Set up an independent EU authority for digital sector supervision that controls big corporations' market power
- ★ Introduce a tax on digital services and manage crypto-currencies
- ★ Ensure data protection by end-to-end encrypting electronical communication



A photograph of the European Union flag waving on a tall pole in front of a modern, multi-story building with large windows. The flag is blue with twelve yellow stars arranged in a circle. The building has a curved facade and many windows. The sky is clear and blue. The overall image has a slight blue tint and some white wavy lines in the top right corner.

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# OTHER EUROPEAN PARTIES

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## Other European Parties

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Aside from these political groups, there are also other forces operating in the European Parliament. The European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE) brings together parties across the EU from the far left of the political spectrum. Their Spitzenkandidaten Nico Cué (Belgium) and Violeta Tomić (Slovenia) are mostly focused on social equality, fighting climate change, limiting the powers of big corporations and tackling challenges derived from trade and globalisation. The GUE is projected to lose a few seats in the next election, going from 52 to 46. Still, depending on how other centre and left parties perform, they may have an opportunity to cooperate in a left alliance in the next legislative term.

On the right side of the spectrum, parties across the EU are expected to see great gains. The Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) group is currently the smallest in the European Parliament with 37 seats. Polls suggest it could grow to 62 seats, taking account of the current members, such as Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National and Italy's Lega Nord. This group aims to halt further integration at the EU level and some member parties are trying to get their countries to leave the EU.

This Euroscepticism is also found in the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group (EFDD). The driving force of this group is former leader

of the UK Independence Party, Nigel Farage, who has now created a new party in the UK, the Brexit Party. This party is doing well in the polls, though its MEPs are not expected to sit in the European Parliament for long due to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Taking into account the Brexit Party's participation, the EFDD is expected to gain 4 seats, from 41 to 45. Other parties in this group include Italy's 5 Star Movement and Germany's Alternative für Deutschland.

It is difficult to foresee how the Eurosceptic movement in the European Parliament will evolve after the European Parliament elections. Many new nationalist parties have been created, such as Vox in Spain and Forum for Democracy in the Netherlands, which are expected to win some seats and in terms of their political views on the EU, would fit well with the EFDD or ENF. This has prompted some to try to join all these forces to create one Eurosceptic bloc in the next European Parliament.

However, despite sharing similar views on EU integration, there are several areas where these parties do not agree, including for example on common approaches to immigration and economic policies. The question is therefore how all these alliances will shape up after the European Parliament elections and to what extent this will impact the EU's upcoming legislative programme.



# The next steps to the next 5 years

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To get an impression of what the next five years have in store for the EU, it is important to also look at the European Council. EU leaders will over the next few months come together to agree on the EU's priorities over the next legislative term. They are set to draft a political briefing to be shared with the new President of the European Commission, who will be responsible for translating these priorities into actions. It is expected that EU leaders will finalise their briefing in June.

The new European Commission will start work in November 2019. In December, it will publish its first Work Programme, which will outline the political priorities for the upcoming year, including which laws it wants to introduce, change or withdraw. Around this same time, the EU institutions are also expected to finalise the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the EU's long-term budget. This will outline the bloc's spending plans over 2021-2027.

While there is a level of unpredictability over the significant changes taking place over the next couple of months, by the end of 2019 we will probably have quite a good idea of what the EU will look like in five years.

**The Whitehouse Consultancy's specialist EU team provides strategic counsel on issues ranging from complex legislative and regulatory dossiers to wider policy debates. Our team enables businesses to ensure favourable regulatory environments for their operations, and to assess the viability of expanding into new markets.**

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