

The Likely Political and Policy Consequences of the EP 2024 Elections

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Based on research with **Kevin Cunningham** (TU Dublin) and **Abdul Noury** (NYU-AD)

What I'll Talk About

1. Potential Outcome of EP2024: two forecasts
2. Coalition and cohesion patterns in the current EP
3. Potential policy & political consequences of the elections

Predicting the 2024 EP Elections

Method 1: A “Nowcast”

Take *current opinion poll standings* of national parties

Calculate seats as if the EP election were held “tomorrow”

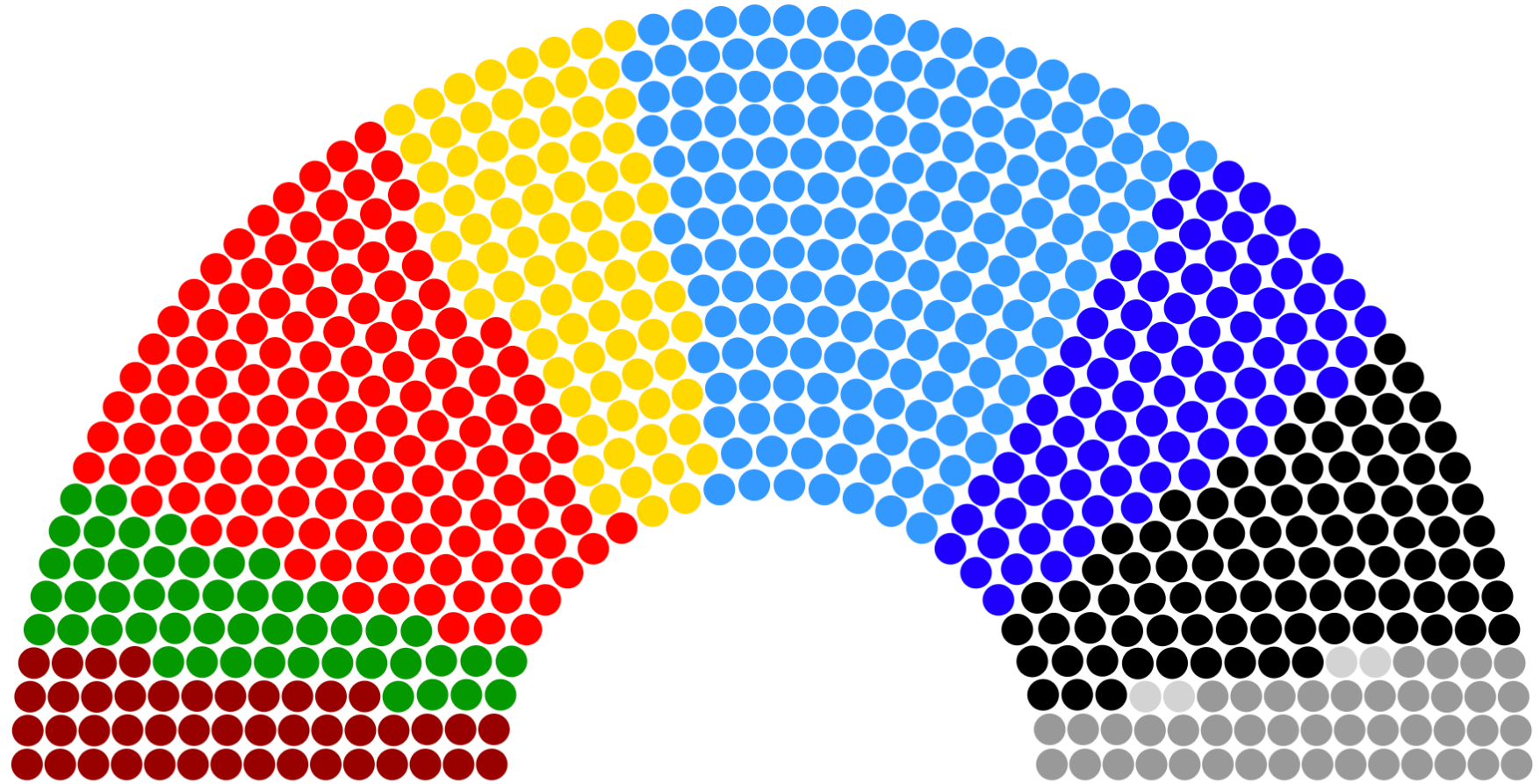
Method 2: A “Forecast”

Estimate the likely vote-share of national parties in June 2024, based on a *statistical model* to predict party support in the election, using a variety of inputs (including opinion polls)

Europe Elects “nowcast”

February 2024

<https://europeelects.eu/ep2024/>



European Parliament Group

	2019 election	February 2024 Projection	Change
● The Left group in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL (LEFT)	41	45	↑ 4
● Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	74	49	↓ 25
● Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)	154	140	↓ 14
● Renew Europe Group (RE)	108	82	↓ 26
● Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (EPP)	182	181	↓ 1
● European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR)	62	83	↑ 21
● Identity and Democracy Group (ID)	73	92	↑ 19
● Unaffiliated parties	0	4	↑ 4
● Non-Inscrits (NI)	57	44	↓ 13

Latest update by Europe Elects: 29 February 2024

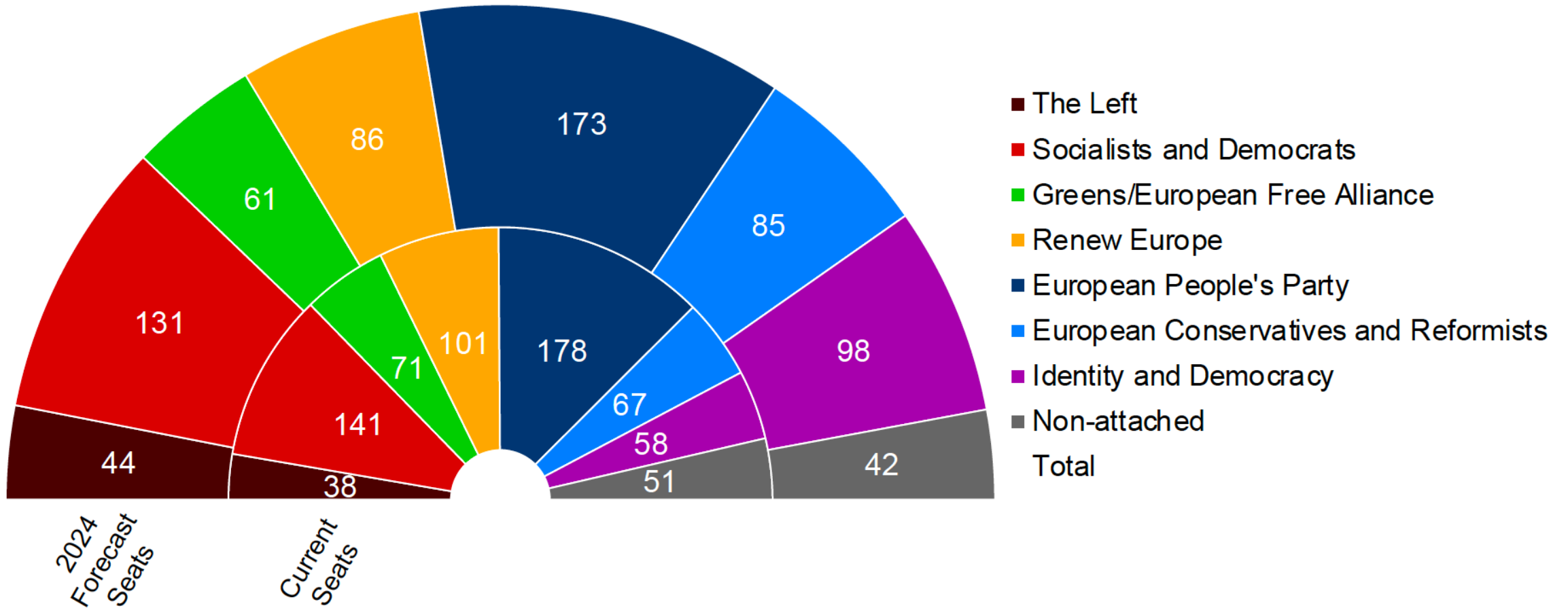
A Statistical Modelling Approach

Kevin Cunningham and I analyzed EP election outcomes (national party vote shares) in the 2014 and 2019 elections and built a model to predict a party's performance in 2024

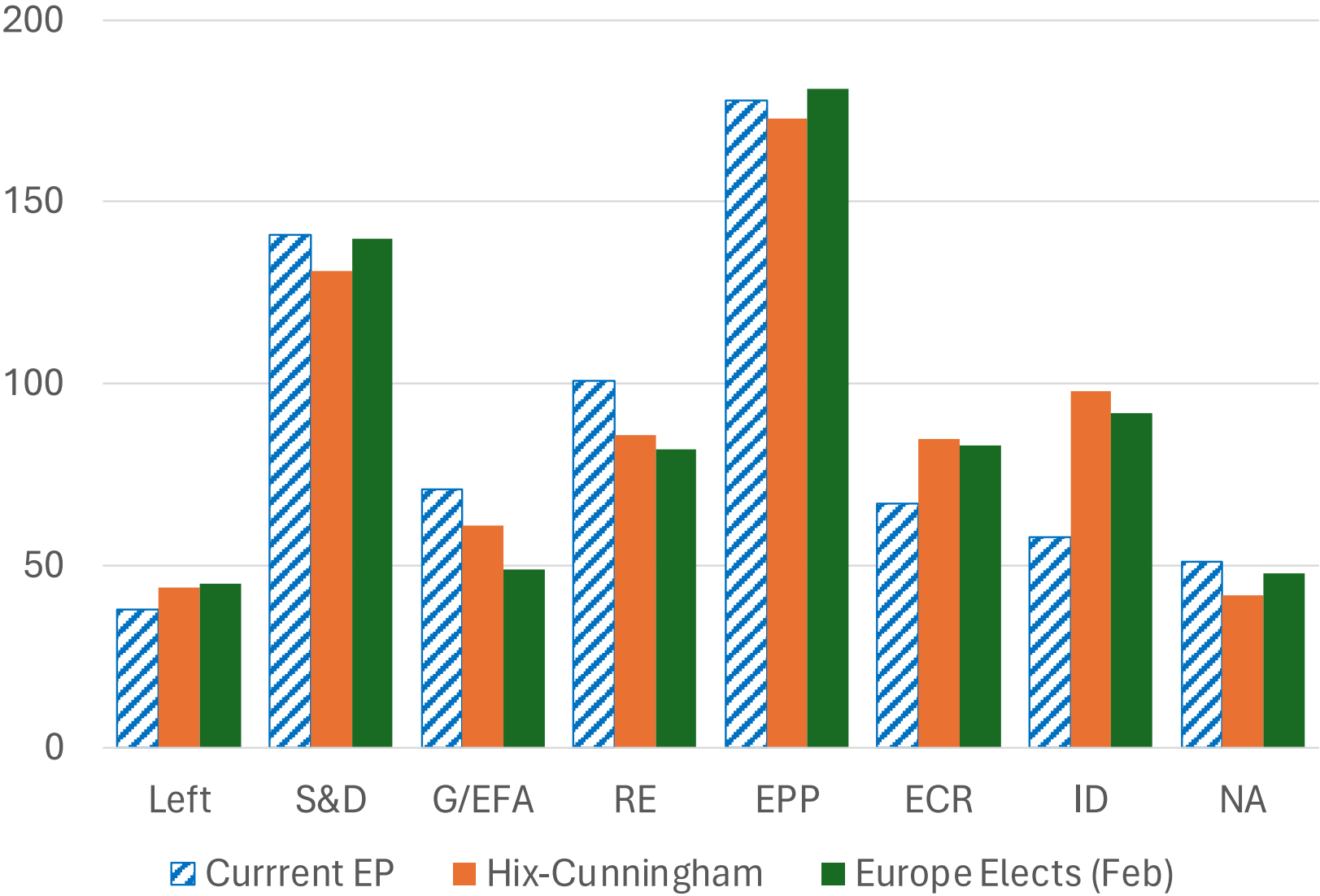
=> EP elections are systematically different to opinion polls 6 months out:

- (National election) opinion polls predict 78% of a parties' EP election vote share
- Parties revert back somewhat to their previous national election vote share (13%)
- Social Democrats and Liberals do worse
- Greens do better
- Anti-European parties do better
- Governing parties do a little better (depending on timing of EP election in national cycle)

Hix-Cunningham: Significant Shift Rightwards



Two Prediction Approaches Compared



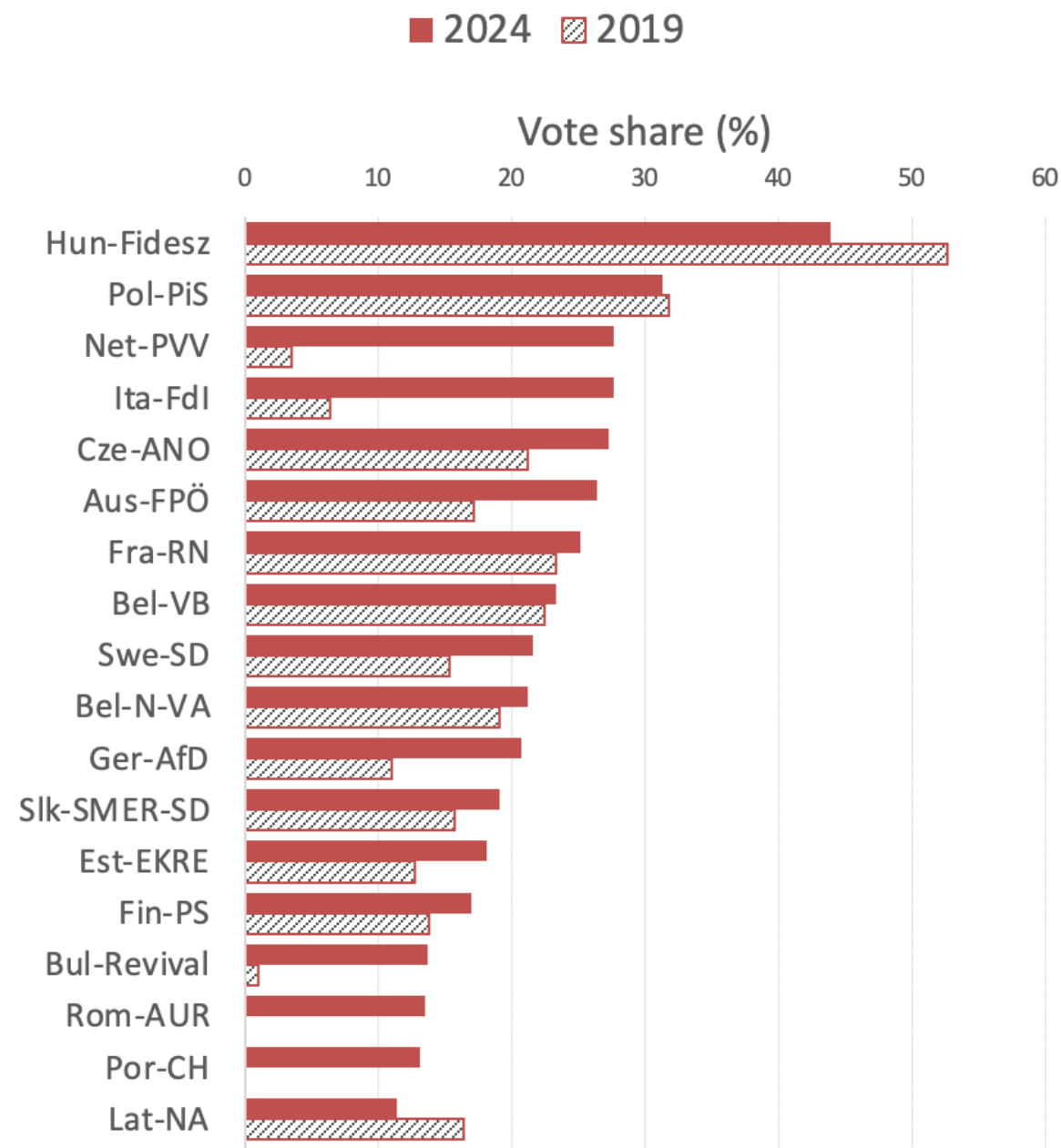
Populist Breakthrough

(Radical Right) Populists **FIRST** in **9 countries**:
AT (FPÖ), BE (VB), CZ (ANO), FR (RN), IT (Fdi),
HU (Fid), NL (PVV), PO (PiS), SK (SMER)

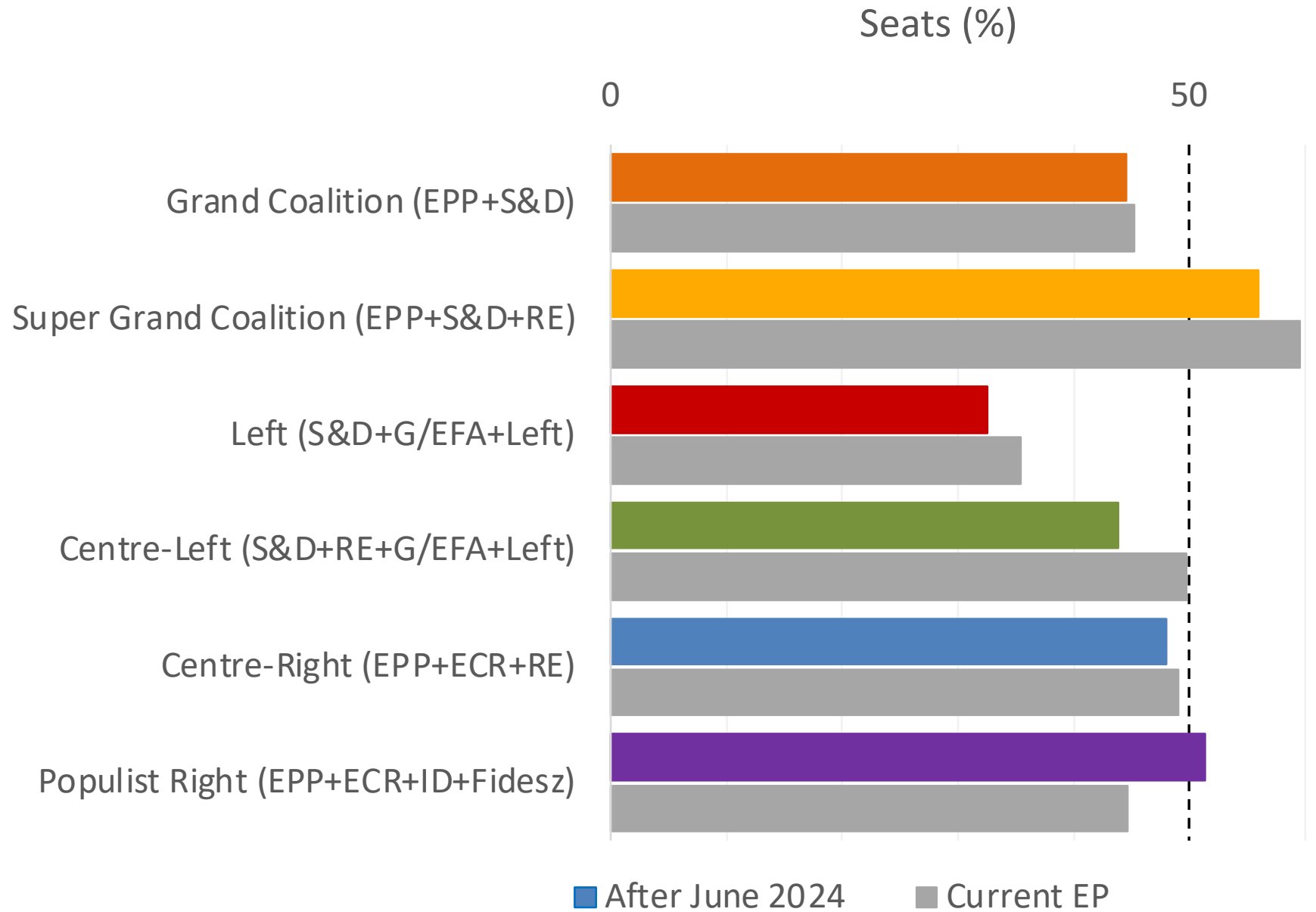
And **SECOND/THIRD** in **9 others**:

BG (Revival), EE (EKRE), FI (PS), DE (AfD), LV
(NA), PT (Chega), RO (AUR), ES (Vox), SE (SD)

DK only country were radical right (DF) will
lose a lot of votes



Coalition Sizes



Some EP Group Membership Uncertainties

Party	Member state	Seats 2019	Forecast Seats 2024	Current group	Expected group	Possible group
Fdi	Italy	6	27	ECR	ECR	EPP
Fidesz	Hungary	13	14	NI	NI	ECR
M5S	Italy	14	13	NI	NI	G/EFA, Left
TD	Poland	0	10		EPP Renew	EPP
BSW	Germany	0	8		Left	NI
Sumar	Spain	6	6	Left	Left G/EFA	Left
SMER-SD	Slovakia	3	5	NI	NI	S&D
REC	France	0	5		ECR	NI, ID
Konf	Poland	0	4		ID	ECR
PP-DB	Bulgaria	1	3	EPP(DB)	Renew	EPP
Revival	Bulgaria	0	3		ID	ECR/NI
HLAS-SD	Slovakia	0	3		S&D	NI

=> mainly on the right of EPP, so doesn't change the overall picture

Policy Implications -> Patterns in 2019-24 EP

Based on roll-call votes in the 2019-2024 European Parliament, different coalitions have tended to dominate in different policy areas:

- A ***centrist grand coalition*** (EPP, S&D + usually RE) usually won on :
budgets, culture & education, economic & monetary affairs, foreign affairs, internal market, legal affairs, transport & tourism.
- A ***centre-left coalition*** (S&D, RE, G/EFA, Left) usually won on:
environment, civil liberties & justice and home affairs, development, employment & social affairs, women's rights.
- A ***centre-right coalition*** (EPP, RE, ECR + sometimes ID) usually won on:
international trade, agriculture & rural development, fisheries, industry & research.

Coalition Patterns in 2019-24 EP

% of times the plurality of one
group voted the same was as
the plurality of another group

**All roll-call votes
(17,428 votes)**

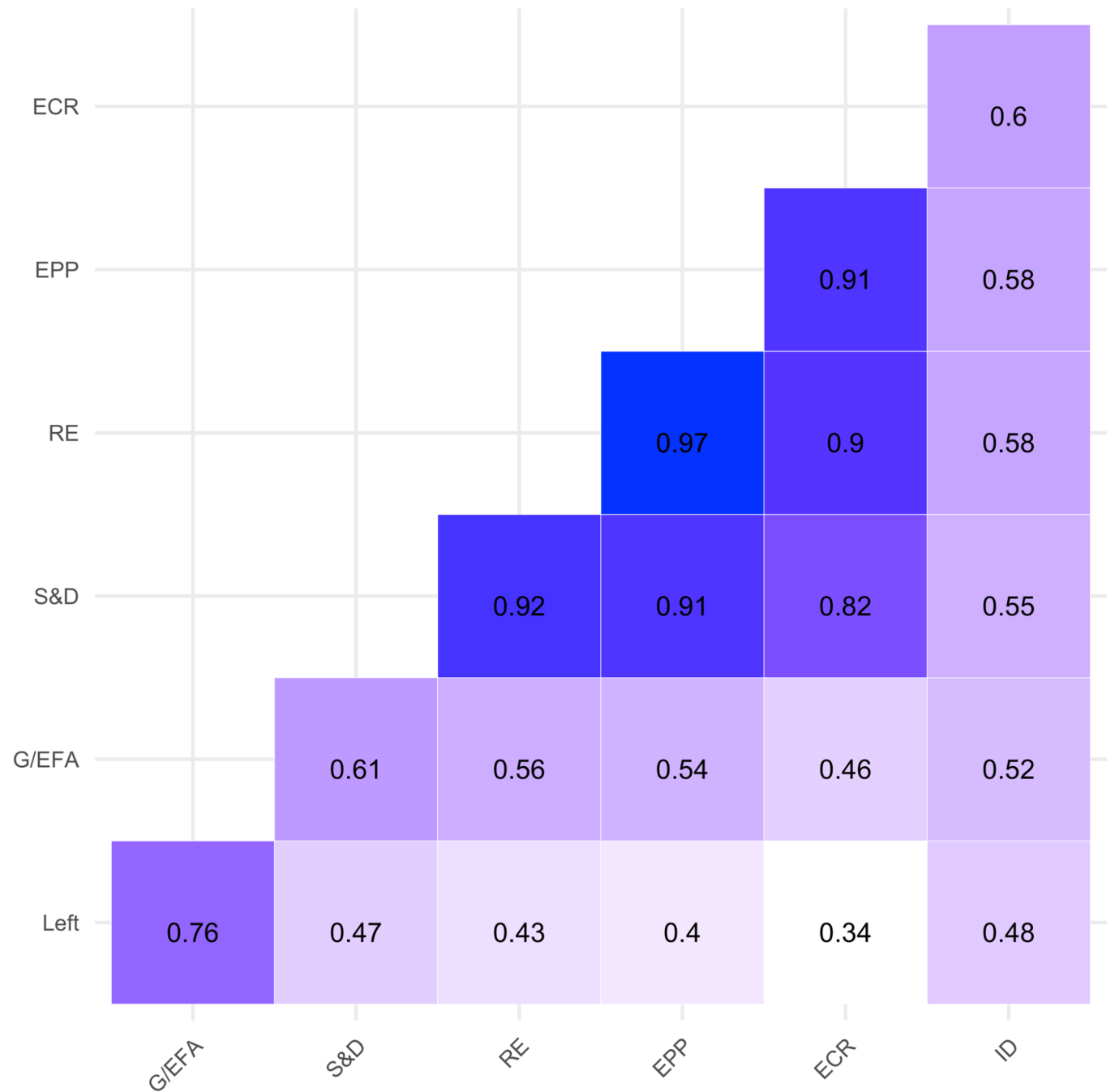


Coalition Patterns in 2019-24 EP

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International Trade

=> Centre-Right coalition



Coalition Patterns in 2019-24 EP

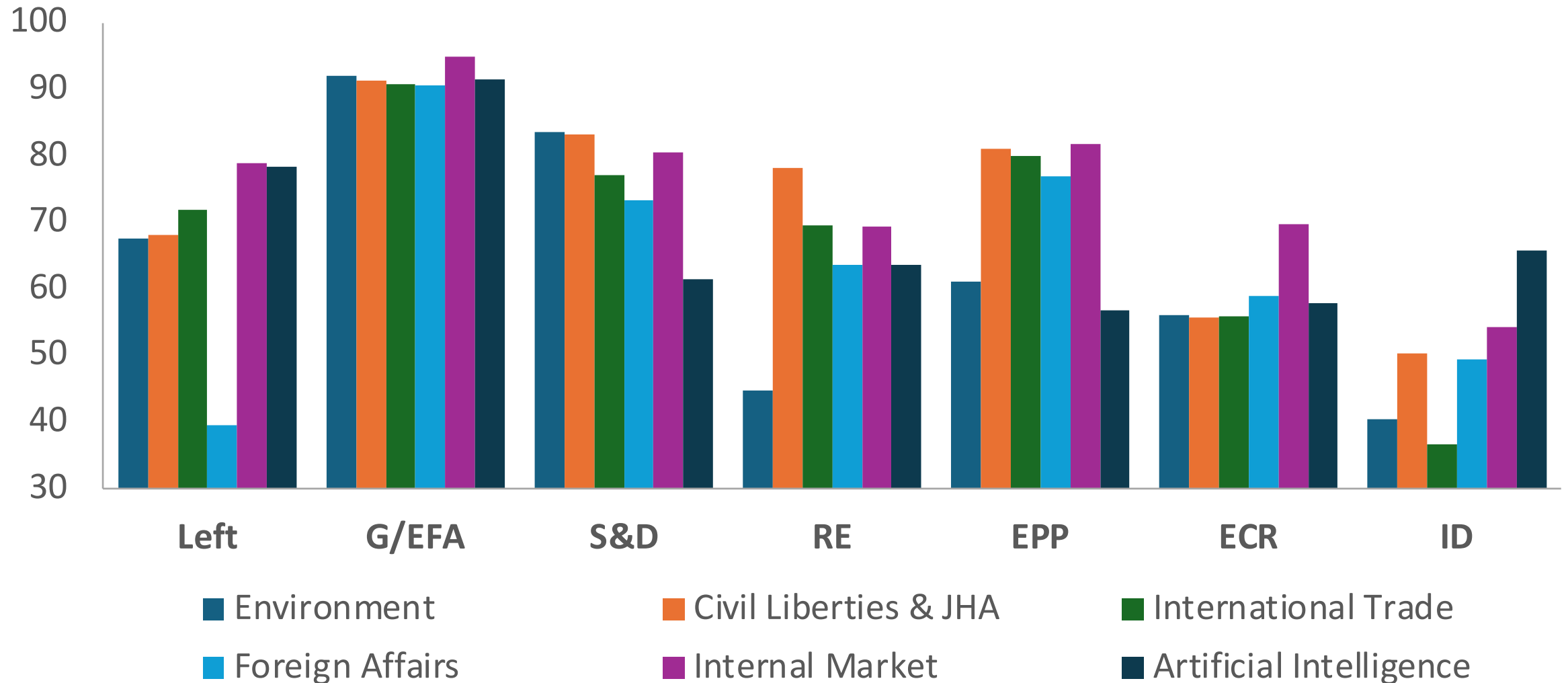
% of times the plurality of one
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**Environment, Public Health
and Food Safety**

=> Centre-Left coalition

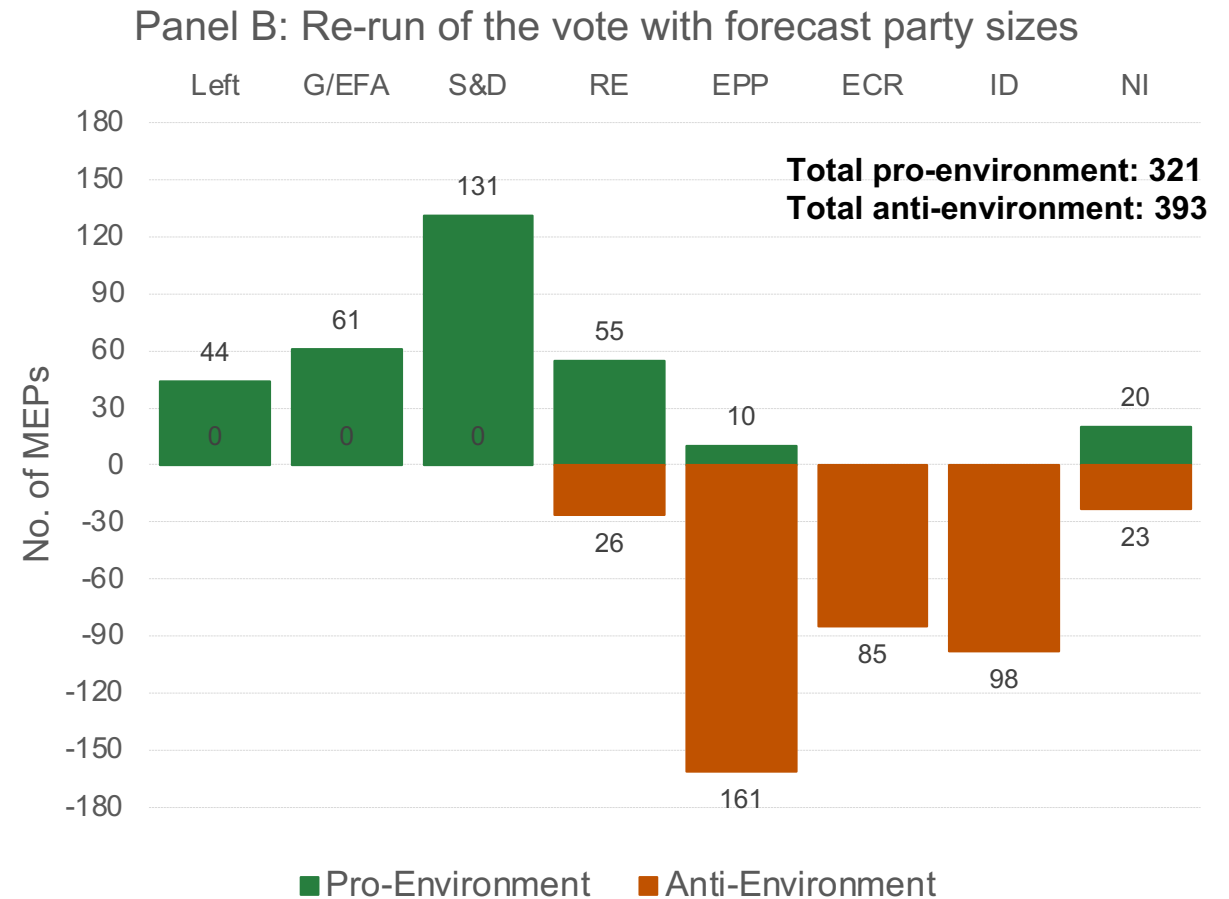
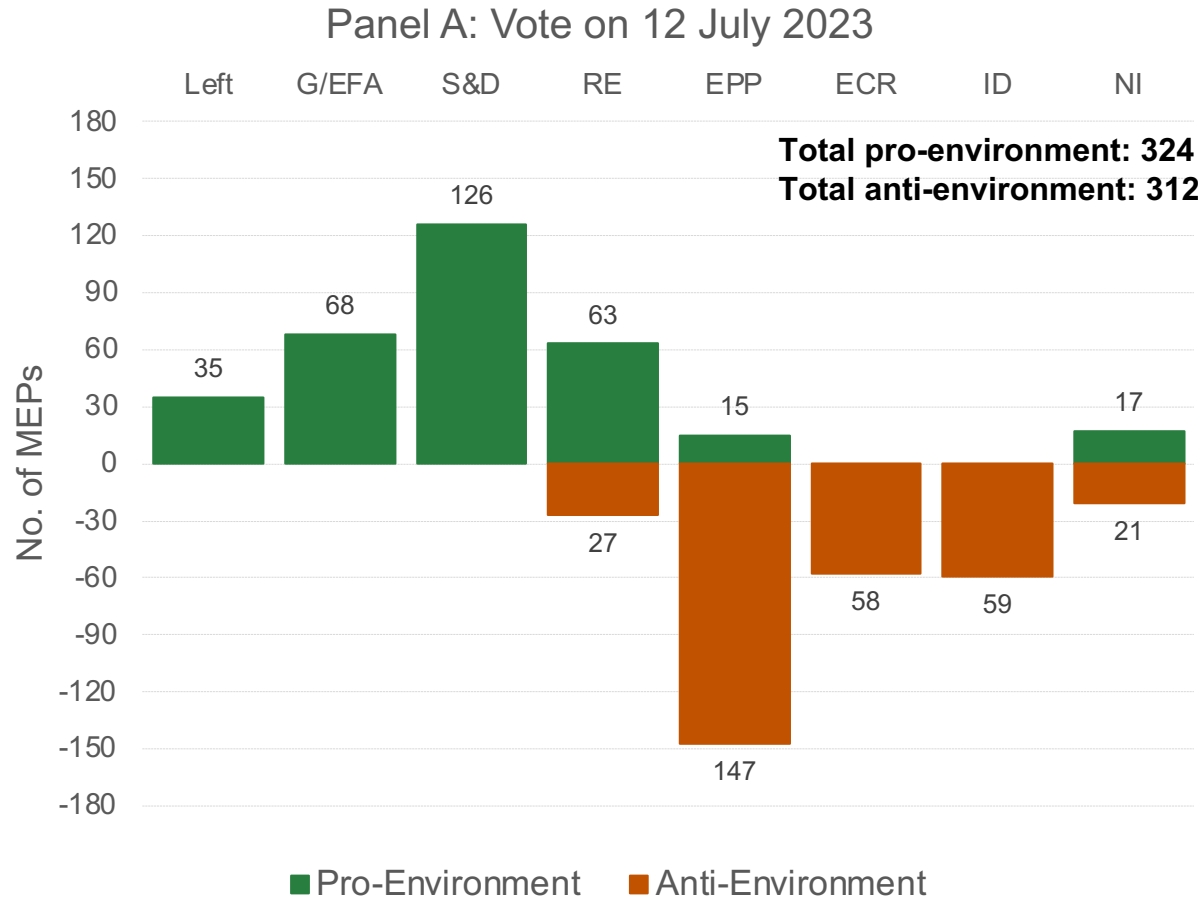


Voting Cohesion in 2019-24 EP



Note: 100 = party united in all votes on a policy issue, 0 = party evenly split in all votes on a policy issue

Example: Proposal to Reject Nature Restoration Law, 12 July 2023



Will President Von der Leyen be re-elected?

The vote is by secret ballot, and requires an “absolute majority”

Coalition in 2019 vote: EPP + S&D + RE, who together had 58% of MEPs

But the vote was: 383 For, 327 Against, 22 Abstain => only just >50% of MEPs

=> Low cohesion in EPP, S&D and RE

With a smaller “super grand coalition” and the same level of cohesion,
Von der Leyen would not be re-elected

=> She will need other groups to support her, e.g. G/EFA or ECR

But, if she leans rightwards, she may lose S&D and some RE

The pivotal MEPs will be on the “left” of EPP (e.g. Irish, Finnish, Swedish)
would they support a different/more centrist candidate?

In Sum

The 2024 EP election is likely to see a major swing to the right, and produce the most right-wing EP we have ever seen: “**median MEP**” in **EPP** not RE for first time

A **populist right bloc** (EPP+ECR+ID+Fidesz) could have >50% of the seats

A **centre-left coalition** (RE voting with left groups) likely to have <50%

This could have major **policy implications**:

- Highly unstable coalitions, and a weaker “super grand coalition”
- A new right-wing majority on environment and migration issues
- But these effects will depend on the cohesion of ECR and ID, as well as EPP

It might not be as simple for **President Von der Leyen** to be re-elected as she might have thought a few months ago – it will depend on the position of S&D, and on the cohesion of the groups supporting her