

EREF Report

European Parliamentary Elections – Voting Guide

Brussels, 17 May 2019

Introductory Remarks

Elections for the European Parliament are upcoming on the 25th-26th May and the European Political groups have to notify their composition by 24th June. These elections carry particular significance not only due to the social and political climate in Europe with the rise of right-wing and conservative politics on one hand and increase in citizen demand for clear and strong European political action against climate change on the other, but also due to the fact that a large part of current MEPs are expected to change, many of which are allies to renewables.

The larger European Political groups have both differing and heterogenic views when it comes to their attitude towards renewables. Some groups are comprised of national parties who are all in agreement in ranking renewables high in their priorities, some groups are comprised of national parties who both do and do not prioritise renewables while other groups' do not regard the development of renewables as a priority.

This report is split in to two parts. This first part gives an overview of the main European Political groups and their manifestos. The accompanying annex is a tool which aims to provide visibility on the new candidates and whether they or someone in their party are part of EUFORES.

This information can be crucial for renewables associations to know who to contact in the new parliament and to identify possible partners and secure new allies for renewables.

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Main European Political Groups

The Greens/ European Free Alliance

The Greens/EFA presents the most ambitious manifesto in terms of fighting climate change and prioritising renewables. Their agenda revolves around an ecological transition and stepping up EU climate action by raising the 2030 climate target to a reduction of at least 60% greenhouse gas emissions, and implementing a 'Green New Deal' to become a net-zero emission and 100% renewables-based economy before 2050.

They aim to transform the EU's energy system through decentralisation and investing massively in the deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions to reach 100% renewables while phasing out nuclear, coal and other fossil fuels. They also plan to introduce a cross-policy price on carbon emissions through revising the ETS, introducing a carbon tax and adjusting borders for imported emissions.

European United Left/ Nordic Green Left

GUE/ NGL comes quite closely behind the Greens in terms of recognising climate changing and prioritising renewables. Their 'Climate Emergency Manifesto' adopted in April 2019 mentions that the EU must *urgently* revise its 2050 long-term carbon-neutral strategy and focus on climate justice and an 100% renewables-based energy system.

They propose to insert climate justice into the legal bases of the EU and Member States and ensure climate policies follow the principles of climate justice. To this end they propose to increase investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency, to not rely on 'false solutions such as gas or nuclear' and to commit to phasing out fossil fuel and first generation biofuels including palm oil and soy as well as excluding the fossil fuel industry from decision-making processes.

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

The S&D group supports the recently adopted Clean Energy Package but also states that it wishes to 'achieve more'. It supports a transition to a sustainable and decarbonised economy based on energy efficiency, renewable energies and smart infrastructure. It proposes to harness the clean energy transition in order to provide stable and accessible jobs to European citizens.

The group strongly prioritises combatting energy poverty and proposes to do this by prioritising a roll-out of clean energies at the small and medium scale and with a focus on providing energy for the energy poor. Relating to energy, the S&D also supports a safe supply of gas and decreasing the EU's dependency on energy imports by increasing energy efficiency, increasing its share of renewables and interconnecting energy grids in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

ALDE group supports the creation of the Energy Union and purports to champion renewable energies, energy efficiency and decentralised renewable energy production and distribution, but mentions little specific measures as to how to achieve such.

Concretely, the group proposes to increase the EU GHG emissions reduction to target to 55% by 2030 with a view to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 with a 'highly efficient' energy system 'fully based on renewables'. It also proposes to strengthen the ETS by extending it to cover more sectors such as transport in an upstream model and end fuel tax exemptions for international aviation.

The European People's Party

The EPP, in its manifesto, mentions the need to significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the European economy. It plans to do this by reconciling protecting the environment with a dynamic economy.

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Concretely, it proposes to maintain a well-functioning ETS which further incentivises emissions reductions in industry and the energy sector. The group pledges to mobilise investment for low-carbon mobility and to build an energy union where the electricity and gas can cross borders without obstacles.

The European Conservatives and Reformists

The ECR group supports an approach to tackling climate change and greenhouse gas emissions which it defines as sensible. It rejects the use of 'unrealistic targets which will never be fulfilled or properly implemented' and advocates for sensible and sustainable measures which do not place unnecessary and costly burdens on businesses and EU Member States. Aside from a brief reference to the benefits of the ETS, it mentions no other specific policies or measures.

Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom

The ENF groups the far-right parties of Europe. The group's manifesto makes no reference to a need to fight climate change or to renewable energies.