












May 2014

Between 22 and 25 May European citizens voted for the **elections of the European Parliament (EP)**.

The first astonishing figure concerns the elections turnout: 43 % is the EU average, with the lowest participation in **Slovakia (13%)**. Most embarrassing is probably the figure from **Croatia**, newest Member State of the EU, where only 1 out of 4 went to the polls. This raises questions about the process of European integration and the reasons behind Member States' choice to join the "EU club".

The new Parliament will consist of 751 members, less than former 766.

POLITICAL GROUP	SEATS / PERCENTAGE
 EPP (Christian democrats)	213 / 28.36%
 S&D (Socialist and democrats)	190 / 25.30%
 ALDE (Liberals and democrats)	64 / 8.52%
 Greens/EFA	53 / 7.06%
 ECR (Conservatives)	46 / 6.13%
 GUE/NGL (European united left/northern green left)	42 / 5.59%
 NI (Non-attached)	41 / 5.46%
 EFD (Europe of Freedom and Democracy)	38 / 5.06%
 Others	64 / 8.52%

The **European People's Party** is still the first in the class, although it lost more than 50 seats compared to previous elections. The **S&D** confirms its second position, losing a few seats only. The **Liberal-democrats** lost more than 20 seats, while Greens and Conservatives are quite stable. **GUE/NGL** gained ground with 7 seats more. **EFD** switched from 31 to 38 seats, and will try to convince newly elected MEPs (from NI and Others) to join the "Eurosceptic club" in the EP.

Every political group must be made up of 25 MEPs from at least 7 Member States.

For the first time in EU history, following a change introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament will elect the president of the Commission.

Strong of the results achieved by the EPP, Mr **Jean-Claude Juncker** made claim to EU presidency, saying he alone had the right to be the next President of the European Commission. «I want to be the president of the next European Commission because the EPP has won these elections» he said. «I think Jean-Claude Juncker will try to form a majority as I will try to do so too» Mr **Martin Schulz** (S&D) replied. The game is open for this and other seats of power.

Country results: a eurosceptic wave?

Most striking outcome of the EP elections is definitely the score of the extreme right wing party Front National (FN). First party in **France**, with 25% of votes (24 seats in the EP), FN undermines the stability of Socialist government led by Francois Hollande. His party lost ground, drifting to 14%, while centre-right UMP did not go beyond 20%.

Eurosceptic are also the first party in **UK**, where

Nigel Farage's UKIP took over 29% (22 seats). As to the other British parties, Conservatives took 24.2% of the votes (16 seats) while Labour did not go beyond 23.7 % (14 seats). Lib-Dems made a step back, gaining only 1 seat in the EP.



The independent's Front page (May 26, 2014)

In **Austria**, nationalists from *FPÖ* gained 4 seats (19.50% of votes). Winning party in Austria is *ÖVP* (27.30%) followed by *SPÖ* (23.80%). They will both obtain 5 seats in the new Parliament.

The **Danish People Party** is another surprise of these elections; with 26.60 % of votes they will obtain 4 seats in the EP, where they are members of EFD. Together with *UKIP*, *Lega Nord* and other anti-EU parties, they will try to challenge traditional pro-EU groups.

In **Poland**, where Christian democrats and Conservatives gained most of the seats (23 and 19 respectively), the Eurosceptic party *KNP* obtained 4 seats with 7.2%.

Angela Merkel's *CDU* confirmed itself as first party in **Germany** with 35.3% although this is the worst party's result from 1979. *SPD* did a step forward with 27.2%, while eurosceptic party *AFD* gained 7% of votes.

In the **Netherlands**, the left wing-liberals obtained a great success (8 seats) while social democrats obtained just 2 seats, same as the Greens, less than EPP (4 seats) and GUE (2 seats).

Radical left *Syriza* is the first party in **Greece**, with 26.5%. Extreme right *Golden Dawn* gained 10%. EPP still got 6 seats thanks to *New Democracy*.

In **Spain**, both Christian democrats and socialist went down, with respectively 17 and 14 seats.

Izquierda unida (Left wing) obtained 6 seats, and new movement *Podemos* ranked fourth in the table.

Other countries where centre-right parties won are: **Hungary, Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Ireland, Croatia and Czech Republic**, where pro-Europe liberal party *ANO* ranked first.

Social democrats won in **Italy**, where *Partito Democratico* ranked first with exceptional 40%. **Portugal, Sweden, Romania and Slovakia** booked also good scores for social democratic parties. *Socialdemokraterna* had a great success in **Sweden** (6 seats), with 10 points more than the *MP* (Greens) and Prime Minister Reinfeldts' *Moderata*.

Undoubtedly these elections confirmed the anti-EU feeling which preceded them, with extreme-right and left wing parties gaining ground in the Brussels arena. However, the result of this electoral round will barely affect the politics of the European Union. We can expect an increased cooperation between traditional pro-European groups, i.e. EPP, S&D, ALDE and Greens, on the main EU dossiers. However, it will not be easy to convince these different groups when it comes to housing issues (energy costs, right to housing assistance, tenure security).

What happens next

27 May: 2 meetings by EP leaders and informal European Council to interpret election results

28 May: Heads of national delegations will meet in Brussels to evaluate elections results, discuss procedures and programming

1st half of June: constituent group meetings

9-16 June: group hearings of Commission's presidency candidates

1 July: constitutive Plenary of new EP and elections of EP President

News in brief

Split incentive workshop in Namur- On March 13th, the IUT participated in a European Commission workshop on the implementation of Energy efficiency directive's Article 19.¹ The debate was about the split incentives between tenants and landlords when it comes to energy retrofitting in residential buildings. The IUT raised awareness about the problems that tenants have to face in many European cities, where rents undergo substantial increases following energy renovation works. The main argument from Barbara Steenberg (Head of IUT liaison office to the EU): «Energy efficiency works should lead to lower costs for tenants, not to higher rents and – in some cases – evictions. It is necessary to build an EU coalition around the theme of cost-neutral renovations for the tenants». And this was a good occasion to put our arguments forward.

Emmanuelle Causse from UIPI (small landlords' organisation) pointed out that deep renovations are unaffordable for both parties (landlords and tenants). «We should rather talk about step by step renovations, which take into account the realities on the ground».

IUT Board meeting- Board members met in Prague on April 24-25 to discuss main issues at stake, i.e. the European elections, the organisation of the International Tenants' Day, and other. **Mr Libor Rouček (MEP), Sven Bergenstrahle (IUT) and Milan Taraba (SON)** had a joint press release at the Czech Senate. They highlighted the positive results of Czech housing policies and called for participation to the European elections. On the same occasion, IUT President presented the tenants milestones for the EU elections: enforcement of the right to housing in EU Member States; definition of social housing target group to be left at national level; a "social" energy transition; tenure neutral policies at country-level.



IUT Board members at the Czech Senate

The Board expressed concerns about the TEN-law project, which aims to harmonise EU tenancy law without taking into account the view of civil society associations.

The Board decided that the **theme of International Tenants Day 2014 will be tenants' empowerment**. Last but not least, board members voted for an increased cooperation with SOLIDAR (European social NGOs defending workers' rights).

ERHIN project- The Stakeholder Forum is in the process of assessing good practices from European housing providers. The selection is aimed to select one best practice under five different objectives: local social sustainability, environmental sustainability, economic responsibility, good governance and relations with stakeholders, human resources management. **The top 5 applications will be rewarded during the International Tenants Day, which will take place on October 6, in Brussels.**



ERHIN meeting in Brussels, May 7, 2014

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<http://iet.jrc.ec.europa.eu/energyefficiency/workshop/overcoming-split-incentive-barrier-building-sector-workshop>

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