

Introduction

Since Autumn 2018, we have seen the mobilization of young teenagers against climate change demonstrating regularly and simultaneously in many cities across the European continent. This mobilisation, which shows a call on political leaders to take swift and concrete action against global warming, raises questions about how the EU can tackle this "climate crisis".

Youth movements against climate change appeared in various European countries in the autumn of 2018. Responding to the call of the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, several movements have emerged such as *Fridays for Future* and *school strikes for the Climate*. What they have in common is that they meet regularly and demonstrate simultaneously, calling on political decision-makers to act. They have also contributed to a generalized awareness of the problem (93% of EU citizens see climate change as a serious problem and 79% see it as a very serious problem)¹. The "climate crisis" is first and foremost an expression that young activists have helped to create and disseminate, like "climate justice". This expression is part of the field of "climate change", to underline that the urgency to act but also to characterize as a "crisis" the manifestations of climate change, i.e. the increase in the global temperature of the Earth through the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere².

When we talk about the European Union, we are talking about both its Institutions (Parliament, Commission, Council, European Council...) and its twenty-eight Member States. 2019 was supposed to be a critical year for the European Union, due to the European Parliament elections in May, with the appointment by the European Council of a number of positions, leading to a major institutional renewal. Also, 2019 was to see the United Kingdom leave the EU and conclude negotiations on the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework. Finally, at Member State level, in addition to the European elections, several countries had to organise elections

¹ European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 490, Report on Climate Change

² It should be noted that the term climate change also has a political origin since it was the Conservatives, notably Dick Cheney, who put forward this term to replace the more accurate term "global warming".

planned or not: Portugal, Spain (April and November), Austria, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Denmark, Finland, Hungary.

The organisation of elections in all these countries, the postponement of Brexit and the difficulties in setting up the von der Leyen Commission, as well as the slow pace of negotiations on the MFF have modified these initial plans, weakened the Institutions, and have not allowed the European Union to act as early as it was foreseen. It is nevertheless interesting to note that these difficulties have nothing to do with climate, and if Europe does not act on climate it is not because it does not want it but because it cannot.

Have youth movements against climate change caused a turning point in the fight against climate change through elections and institutional renewal?

An analysis of the results of the European elections with particular attention to the results of the green parties shows that the European elections were the opportunity for an environmentalist push, but that this was significant only in a limited number of countries. An observation of youth movements shows in the same way that the countries where young people have been most mobilized are those where ecologists have scored the highest. The Continent is not divided on the theme of climate change. It is more an asymmetry of the basis of this perception as an issue: some Member States consider climate as a priority and others not. This asymmetry does not prevent the European institutions, and the Commission in the first place, from taking into account the electoral push.

The 2019 European Elections and the Youth social movements demonstrate an asymmetry in the ecology concern

A) The 2019 European elections: a success for the Greens in a limited number of countries

The European elections for the ninth parliamentary term of the European Parliament were held between Thursday 23 May and Sunday 26 May 2019. They were organised by the 28 Member States of the European Union, whose nationals were called upon to vote and appoint 751 Members.

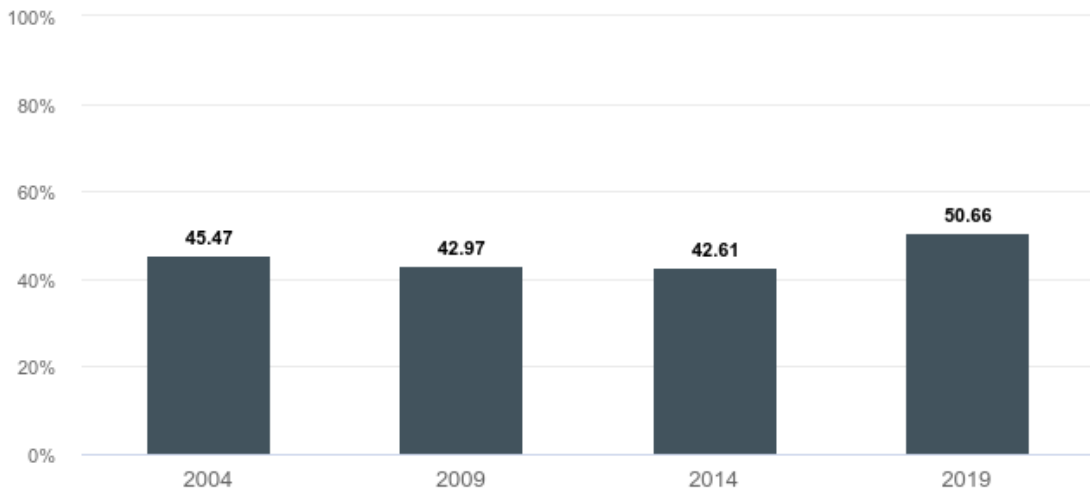
As a result of the elections being organised by each Member State, European elections are strongly influenced by the domestic political context, which has a direct influence on citizens' participation and the orientation of their vote. Among the main variables observed: the simultaneous holding of European elections with (more mobilising) local elections, as in Spain or in Germany, the presence among the national list leaders of a *spitzenkandidat* for European Commission President as in the Netherlands, and finally the electoral calendar, i.e. how this election fits into the governmental cycle³; in France, for example, these European elections are the first elections since Emmanuel Macron and *La République en marche* came to power in May and June 2017, and after a year marked by the Gilets Jaunes movement.

The above-mentioned factors influenced electoral behaviour, which partly explains the higher increase in voter turnout in some countries than in others. Indeed, the 2019 European elections were distinct by a rebound in voter turnout and a spectacular mobilisation of the electorate.

³ *Commentaire*, Autumn 2019, Election en Europe

Turnout by year

Final results



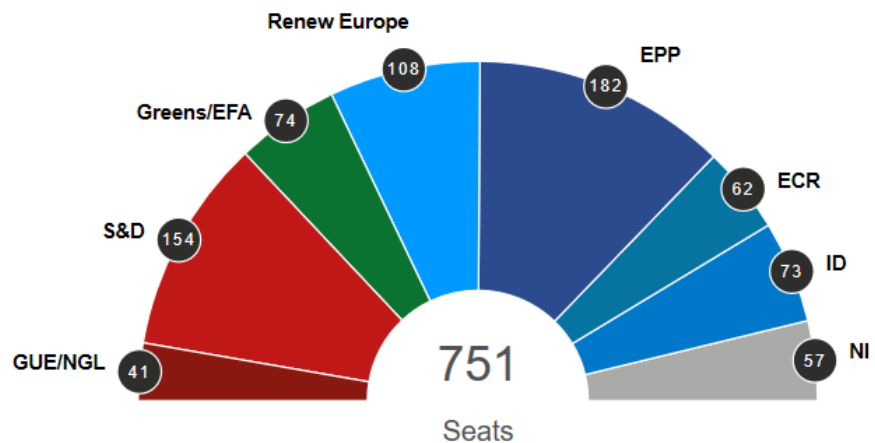
Source: European Parliament in collaboration with Kantar



The graph above shows a significant increase compared to 2014 (plus eight points) but it also shows that this is the highest participation rate since the major enlargement on 1 May 2004, when ten countries joined the European Union. Alain Lancelot's work shows that the more recently the Member State has joined the EU, the less participation there is in that country.

European Parliament 2019 - 2024

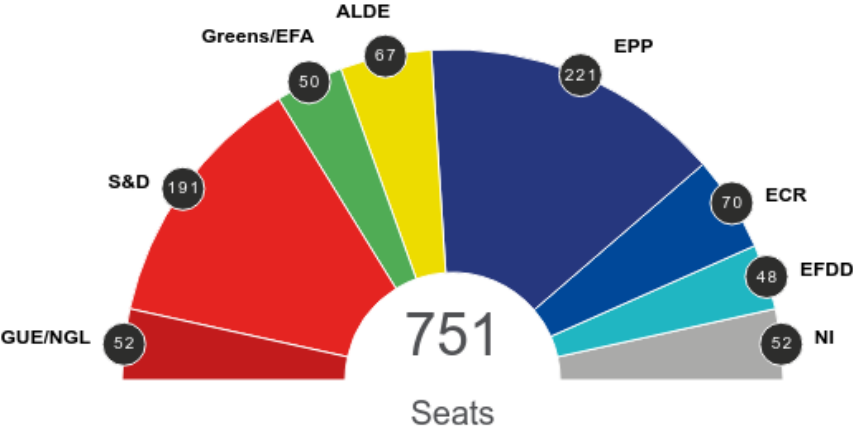
Constitutive session



In terms of results, there is a fragmentation of the hemicycle with no clear majority emerging. The two major political groups that had previously dominated are in sharp decline and, at 44.2%, less than in 2014 (53%), are losing an absolute majority of seats and losing *de facto* control of Parliament. For this purpose, alliances with the other parties are now necessary. Following the European elections, the Greens/EFA group welcomes a historically high number of MEPs (1). This reflects an electoral push in favour of environmentalist parties (2) that can be observed almost everywhere in Europe but has no tangible consequences in only three major countries. Looking back at the geographical composition of the group, it can be seen that it is unbalanced in that only a limited number of countries are represented (3).

European Parliament: 2014-2019

Constitutive session



1) The Green Group at a historically high level

The Green Group at an important level

Political groups in the European Parliament	Number of seats	% of seats
EPP - Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)	182	24.23%

Political groups in the European Parliament	Number of seats	% of seats
S&D - Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament	154	20.51%
Renew Europe - Renew Europe group	108	14.38%
Greens/EFA - Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance	74	9.85%
ID - Identity and Democracy	73	9.72%
ECR - European Conservatives and Reformists Group	62	8.26%
GUE/NGL - Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left	41	5.46%
NI - non-attached Members	57	7.59%

Following the 2019 elections, the ecologist parliamentary group Greens / EFA⁴ has 74 MEPs, or almost 10% of the Chamber. If it was important in 2014, environmentalists will become

⁴ In the European Parliament, the elected representatives of the green parties sit in the Greens/EFA group. This group appeared in 1984. Since 1999, green elected representatives have been sitting with the elected representatives of the European Free Alliance (EFA) party. This party does not promote political ecology, and these elected officials are neither green nor particularly ecologically minded.

inevitable in 2019 as the fourth largest group in the Chamber. In addition, discussions are underway with the Italian Five Star Movement, whose positions in favour of environmental protection make it possible to integrate them into the groups.

A historical comparison shows that this level is historically high. The table below shows the evolution of the group's size over the various terms of office.

Term of office	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024
Political Group	30	23	48	42	58	50	74
The Greens	30	23	38	35	48	50	66
Percentage of seats	5,79	4,06	7,67	5,74	7,47	6,7	9,85

Observations

There is no linear increase. Nevertheless, it can be observed that during the elections of 1989, 1999, 2009 and 2019 the results are much better than in 1994, 2004 and 2014.

At the level of the political group, we see that the group has never had so many Members, with an increase of almost 50% compared to the previous legislative period. Nevertheless, while the number of members of the European Free Alliance remains stable with an average of ten over the period 1999 - 2019, the number of green parliamentarians is much more fluctuating. What is true for the group is also true for the fraction of the Greens: the number of green elected

⁵ <https://www.lecho.be/economie-politique/europe/general/philippe-lamberts-discute-du-passage-du-m5s-italien-chez-les-verts-europeens/10164096.html>

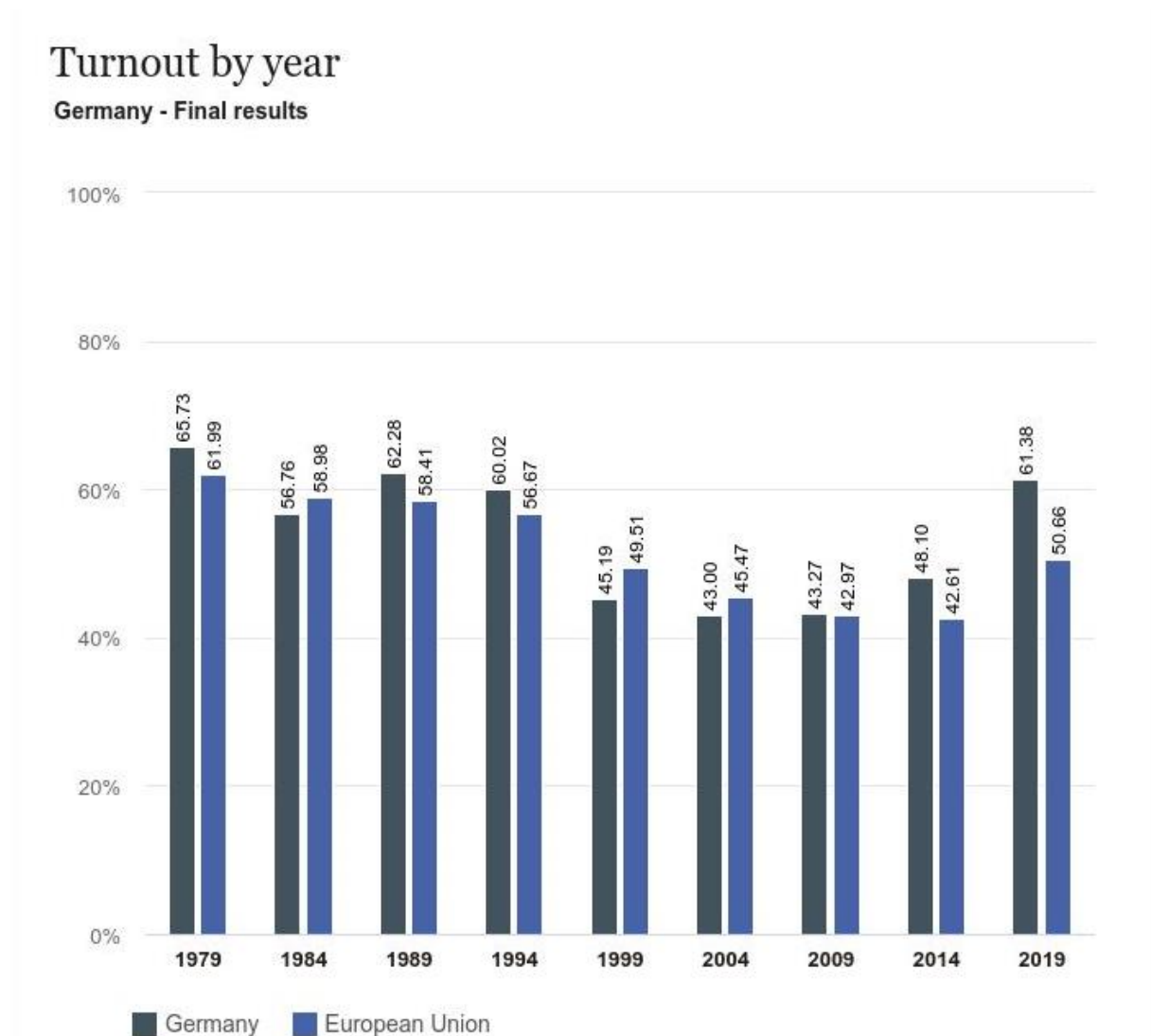
officials has never been so large as it is today, going from fifty to sixty-six elected officials, an increase of almost 30%.

2) *A green electoral push*

The increase in the number of members of the Greens/EFA Group is explained by the increase in the size of the national delegations of three large Member States and therefore by the good result of three parties: the *Grünen* in Germany, *Europe-Ecologie-Les-Verts* in France and the *Greens* in the United Kingdom. In all three countries, the green parties doubled their results and the number of elected deputies. Nevertheless, it is necessary to look back at each of these elections to understand how the ecologists achieved these results.

The good results in Germany, France and the United Kingdom

In Germany

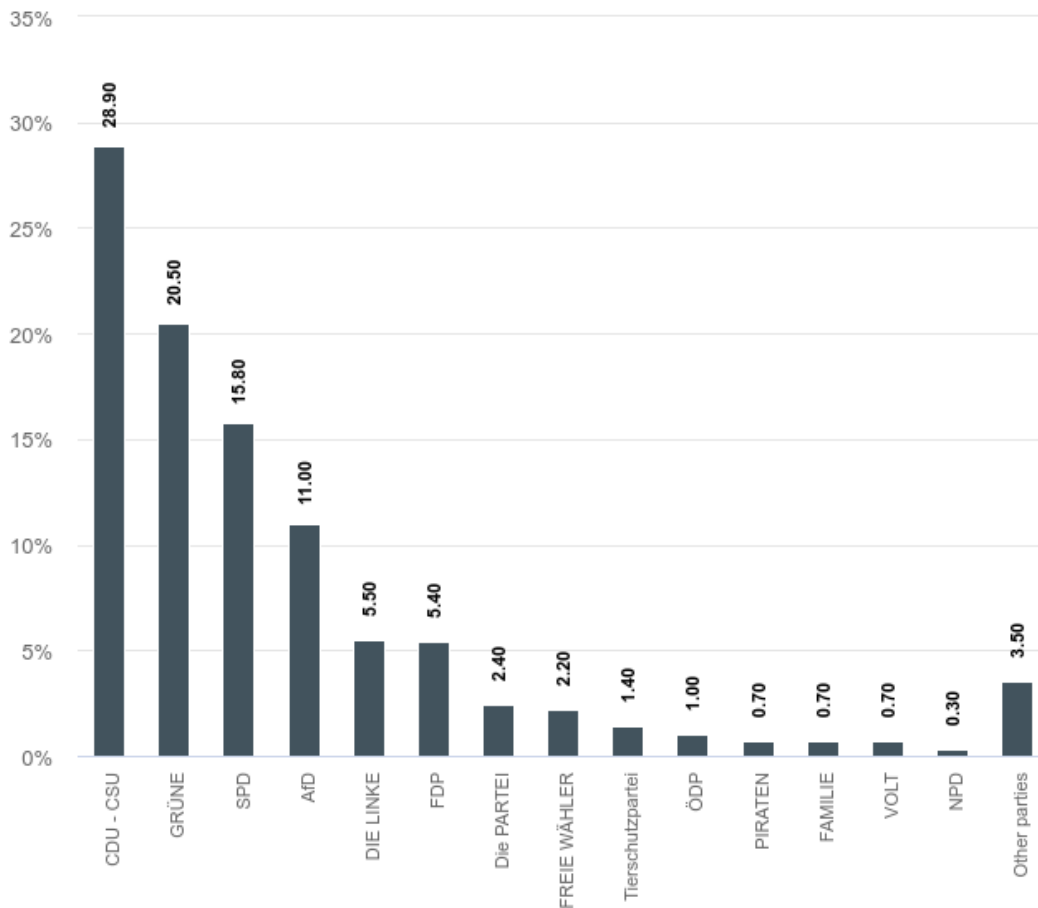


In Germany, the *Grünen* score is not a surprise as several polls had foreseen it, and the poll revealed an important score: 20.50% of the votes behind Angela Merkel's *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands – Christlich-Soziale Union* (CDU-CSU) list (at 28.9%) but, and this is a first in German history, far ahead of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) at 15.80%. The election was marked by a massive increase in voter turnout (to 61.38%, up 13 points compared to the 2014 elections). This participation is the largest since 1994. This is partly due to the simultaneity of the European elections with local elections in several *Länder*, generally calling for more participation. It can be said that the vote in favour of the Greens is an accession vote, it is also a generation vote and a protest vote.

Results by national party: 2019-2024

Germany - Official results

Percentage of votes



In Germany, as in other European countries, climate change has become the main concern of citizens⁶. But the average national score of the Greens does not reflect reality well: the party remains weak in the eastern *Länders*, but very high in large urban centres such as Frankfurt am Main, Munich, and Hamburg. The mobilisation of the electorate and in particular the young electorate has benefited the Greens, among others.

⁶ European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 490, Report on Climate Change

The vote in favour of the Greens is also a protest or an opposition vote. They are now the second party. This can be explained by the weakening of the SPD, which is Merkel's minority partner in the big coalition since 2005 (exception between 2009 and 2013). This electoral weakening can be seen in the European elections since 2004. Similarly, if the CDU remains in the lead, its electoral capital is eroded as much. An Infratest survey shows that the Greens benefit from a vote shift from the SPD but also from the CDU/CSU. And not being in the coalition, they are the only party to have been in parliamentary opposition since 2005, without having to directly criticize Chancellor Angela Merkel, one of the most popular figures in Germany. They appear to be the only alternative, especially since the Greens, who have made a political change by giving more and more space to *realos*, are gaining in legitimacy. In local elections, they did not hesitate to go on coalition with the CDU conservatives in some Länders. Besides, in 2017, they had been ready to negotiate their participation in the federal government under the leadership of Angela Merkel, but the negotiations had not been successful due to the defection of the *Freie Demokratische Partei* (FDP) Liberals. The Greens have been scoring well in all opinion surveys since then.

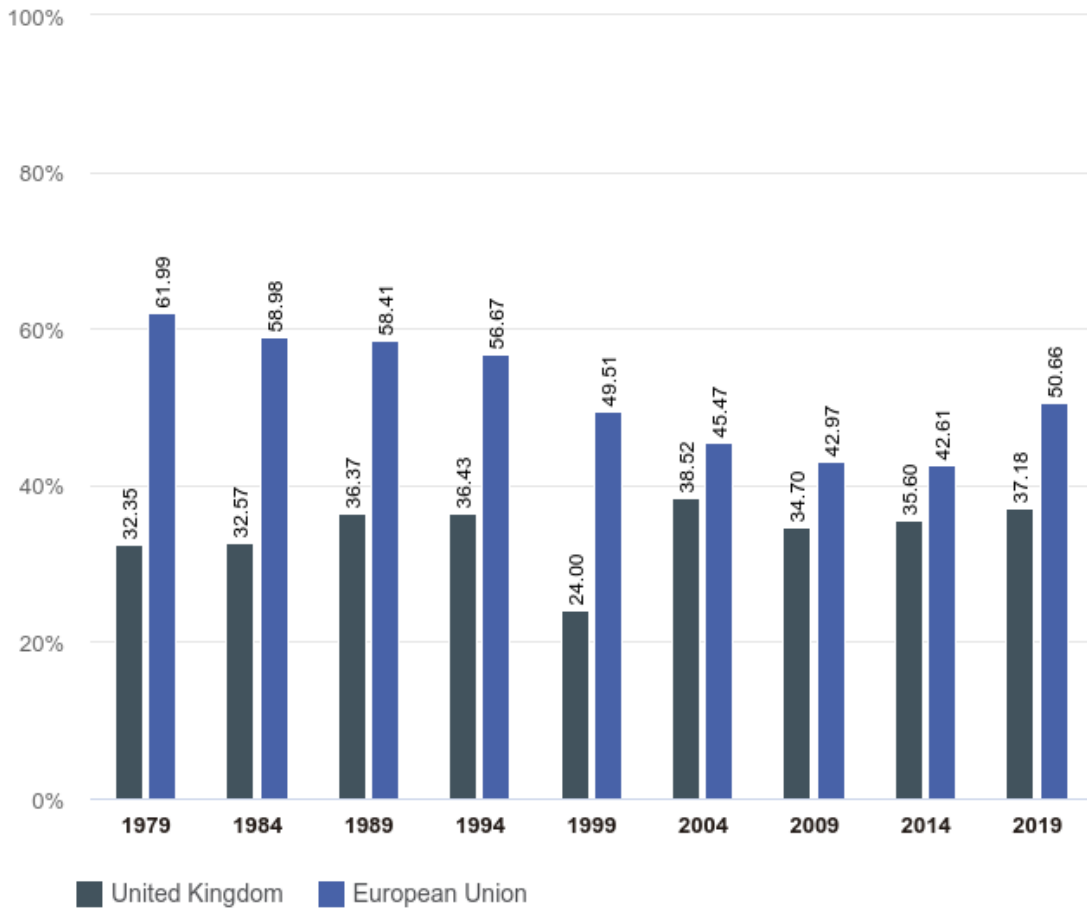
However the support to ecological cause and the mobilization of young people in favour of the Greens explain their score, the position of the opposition party has even achieved the alternation has been just as decisive.

In the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the Greens also scored well in the 2019 European elections, up from 2014 and 2009. There are two reasons for this: the first is related to the party's pro-European positioning, the second is related to its ecological project.

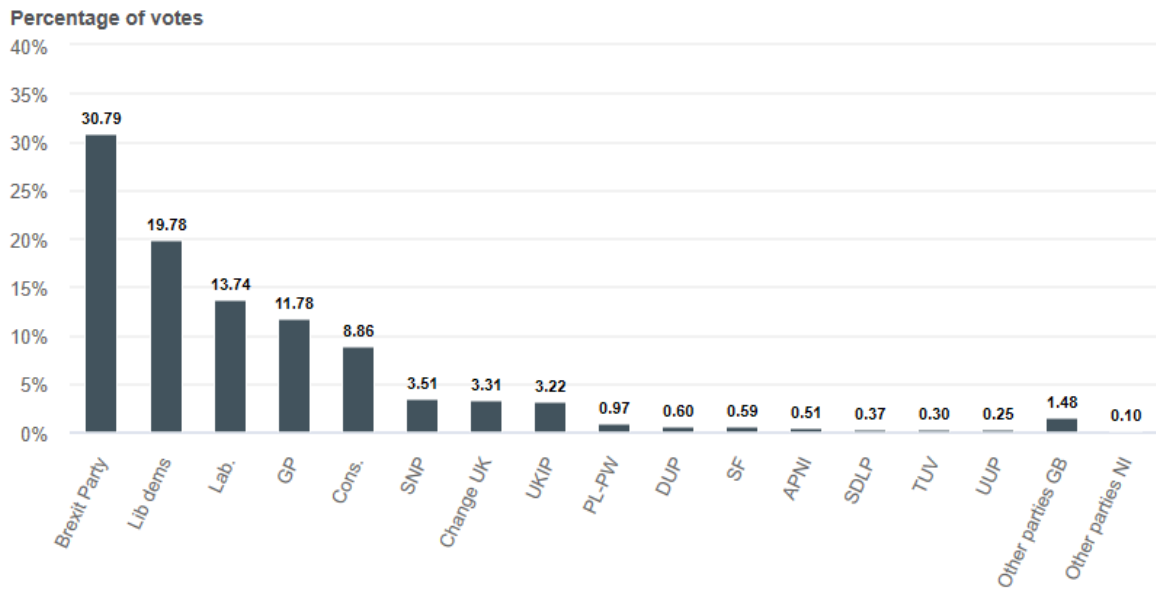
Turnout by year

United Kingdom - Final results



Three years after the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union in which voters had voted by a 52% majority to leave the European Union, negotiations on the divorce between the European Union and the United Kingdom with a view to the latter's exit had not been successful. Still a full member of the EU, the United Kingdom had been obliged to organise the European elections and voters were asked to appoint their representatives in the European Parliament. This election, for which voters were unprepared, not only led to an increase in voter turnout and a sharp increase in parties advocating keeping the United Kingdom in the EU: this is the case of the Liberal Democratic Party, which comes second with 19.78%. The Green Party achieved its highest electoral score with 11.78% of the polls and sent 6 deputies. This score is historically high: never in its history has the party had so many elected representatives, whether in the European Parliament or in the House of Commons.

United Kingdom - Official results



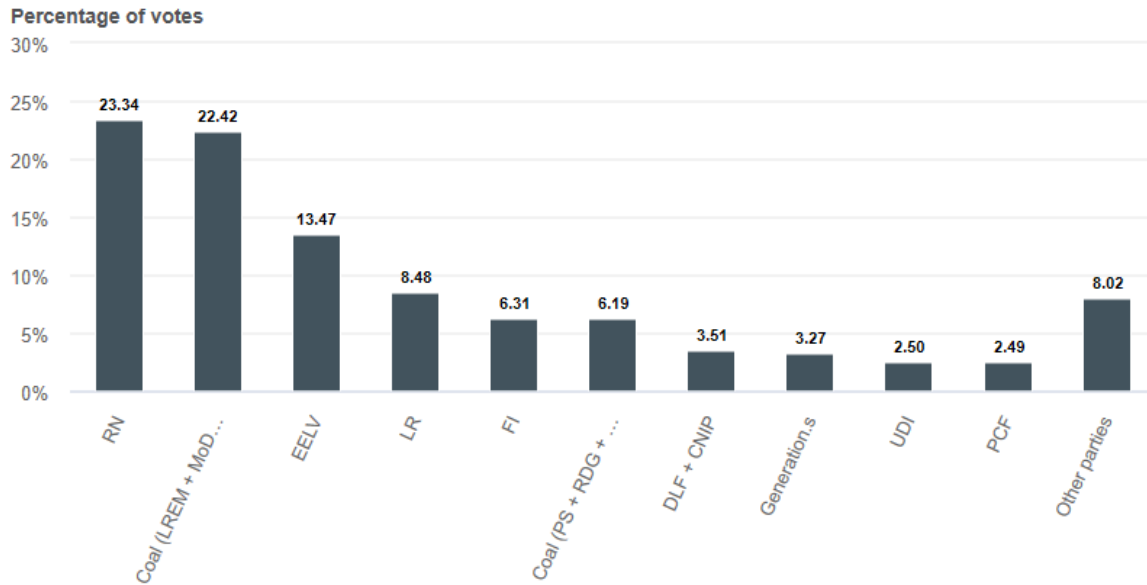
In European elections, which are traditionally more favourable to small parties than general elections, and in the context of Brexit, there is no doubt that the positioning in favour of the United Kingdom's membership of the EU has worked in favour of the Green Party.

In the United Kingdom, environmental protection is not the exclusive domain of environmental parties. Crown Prince Charles of Wales through his foundation is a leading figure in the environmental movement, the Labour (Government from 1997 to 2010) and Conservative (2010 to present) and Liberal Democratic (Conservative coalition partner between 2010 and 2015) parties have worked to implement policies to protect the environment. Also, within the EU, the United Kingdom has been one of the countries promoting environmental policies.

As in Germany, the factors explaining the vote are more a national than a European matter, and although climate change is a concern in the United Kingdom, the issue of keeping the United Kingdom in the EU has been crucial.

In France

In France, the *Europe Ecologie Les Verts* party ranks third behind the *Rassemblement National* and *Renaissance* lists. By collecting 13% of the votes, they sent about ten deputies.



As in the United Kingdom, European elections are traditionally more advantageous for ecologists. Since the elections are held by proportional representation, and the issue is less well perceived by voters, they feel less connected to their party of origin and vote for lists for which they have sympathy but for which they would not vote in the presidential or parliamentary elections.

In 2019, the Europe-ecology list of greens scored better than in 2014 but worse than in 2009, when they had obtained 16%. At that time, climate awareness through the massive distribution of Yann Arthus Bertrand *Home's* film and the seductive personality of Daniel Cohn Bendit (head of the list in Ile de France) had played in favour of the list. Already, the volatility of the electorate had been observed.

By leading the other left-wing political parties (notably *La France Insoumise*, the Socialist Party, the *Generation* movement and the Communist Party), EELV occupies a new spot in the French political landscape. 2019 will perhaps be the end of a cycle initiated in 2016 by the splits and departures towards the *En Marche* of François de Rugy, Barbara Pompili... Note that the Renaissance list included two figures from the Green Party: Pascal Canfin, MEP from 2009 to 2013 and Pascal Durand (MEP since 2014). The presence of these two environmental figures undoubtedly pushed part of the environmentalist electorate to vote in favour of the *Renaissance* list.

In addition to the *Europe-Ecologie* list and the *Renaissance* list, other lists obtained a significant number of votes because of the presence of environmentalists in their list or the important part they played in their programme. Thus, the list of *France Insoumise* includes ecological considerations in its political programme. Benoit Hamon, the founder of the *Generation* movement and candidate for the 2017 presidential election, integrates the entire EELV programme. Finally, the *Place Publique* movement (list partner with the Socialist Party) includes Claire Nouvian, founder of the non-governmental organization *Bloom*, working to preserve the oceans.

Thus, if the ecological offer was already fragmented with more than thirty lists, it must be noted that the electorate expressed its sympathy for political ecology and integrated ecological policies into its vote

Germany, France and the United Kingdom are the largest delegations in the political group, which explains the substantial increase in the number of MEPs, but these are not the only countries where environmentalists score higher than in previous elections.

The ecological push elsewhere in Europe

Thus in the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), the Greens achieved a historic breakthrough result, obtaining a better score than in previous European elections.

In southern European countries, particularly Italy and Spain, environmentalists score better than in 2014, although they are still too low to send MPs. Thus, the increase has been felt even in countries where environmentalist parties score low.

In Italy, the Federazione dei Verdi (FdV) coalition is only 2.32% and ranks seventh⁷. While this score may seem extremely low, it is also a substantial increase since the list had fallen below 1% in 2014. The last sitting MEP for the Italian ecologist party was elected in 2004. The Italian Green Party has always been electorally weak.

⁷ European Parliament official results

3) *Geographical imbalances within the political group*

Country	Greens /EFA	Total seats of
Germany	25	96
France	12	74
The United Kingdom United Kingdom	11	73
Belgium	3	21
Czechia	3	21
Netherlands	3	26
Austria Austria	2	18
Denmark	2	13
Finland	2	13
Ireland	2	11

Country	Greens /EFA	Total seats of
Lithuania	2	11
Spain	2	54
Sweden	2	20
Latvia	1	8
Luxembourg	1	6
Portugal	1	21
Bulgaria		17
Croatia Croatia		11
Cyprus		6
Estonia		6
Greece		21
Hungary		21

Country	Greens /EFA	Total seats	of
Italy		73	
Malta		6	
Poland		51	
Romania Romania		32	

Country	Greens /EFA	Total seats	of
Slovakia Slovakia		13	
Slovenia Slovenia		8	

The cyclical ecological upsurge in these countries is contained by the structural weakness of political ecology in some countries. The political group has almost no elected representatives from Southern Europe (i.e. Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus and Malta). Apart from Portugal, none of these countries has an environmentalist member. Spain has two elected representatives with the Catalan Independents, who are members of the European Free Alliance Party.

There are also no elected representatives from Central Europe (no elected representatives from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland). In this region, Austria is the only country to have Green members of European Parliament. The party is traditionally strong there.

A comparison over time shows that the political group has never had members from these countries. This is explained by two considerations: green parties have always been very unimportant politically and have never had significant results. This geographical imbalance raises an issue of representativeness but has the advantage of allowing a certain political coherence.

B) The youth movements

At Greta Thunberg's initiation (1), several youth movements against climate change have emerged (2), but the extent of mobilisation varies from country to country (3).

1) Greta Thunberg: the legend, the icon and the symbol

About Greta Thunberg, it is essential to recall some biographical facts and the main features of her political discourse. Indeed, it is to her call that thousands of young people have responded and are a source of inspiration for them.

From the end of August 2018, the young Swedish woman Greta Thunberg (born in 2003) is demonstrating in front of the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm. Her main demand is the request to the Swedish Government to take concrete action to achieve the greenhouse gas reduction targets set by the Paris Agreement.

Greta Thunberg is a high school student and demonstrates on Fridays during school hours. She calls on young high school students to follow her example, and also to "strike at the school for the climate". This demonstration, which will soon receive favourable media coverage, usually lasts only a few hours, on Fridays in front of the Swedish Parliament. Later, she will be invited to speak at environmental rallies⁸ and a TED conference⁹.

Effective use of social networks. By using social networks and in particular Twitter and Instagram, where she posts a similar photo every week, she feeds a regular flow of information and creates an increasingly large community, which she will engage more and more frequently. Her accounts on social networks are increasingly followed throughout the fall of 2018.

A famous family. Greta Thunberg's family is not unknown in Sweden, her mother is an opera singer who has performed on several international stages and gained fame after her participation

⁸ <https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/portrait-greta-thunberg-la-jeune-activiste-climatique-qui-inspire-le-monde>

⁹ https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate_change

in a TV show. In addition, she represented Sweden at Eurovision in 2009 (very well attended in Sweden). If she is not a member of a political party, she is committed to defending the LGBT cause and more recently the Climate (under Greta's pressure). The fame of the Thunberg family also played a decisive role in Greta's rise to fame: indeed, the biography of the schoolgirl (co-written by the parents) was published in the last days of August 2018. It recounts the depressive episodes of Greta¹⁰ and her sister, as well as Greta's emerging commitment to the climate.

A story. During these public talks, but also during the interviews she gives, Greta Thunberg discusses a number of elements of her biography: her teenage depression, her school dropout, her autism and the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome. She combines her personal life story with that of her commitment: her autism, for example, would have led her to read the studies of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In addition, she explains how she applies her commitment to her lifestyle by deciding to stop flying or become a vegan.

Her political speech. Between August 2018 and June 2019, Greta Thunberg was invited on several occasions to speak at several institutions (European Parliament, French *Assemblée Nationale*, European Economic and Social Council, etc.) but also at international events such as COP 24 in Katowice (Poland) and the Davos Summit in Switzerland. In September 2019, she participated in a summit on the side-lines of the United Nations General Assembly. It is important to note that she gives these speeches as she becomes more and more famous. As a result, her audience is getting larger and larger. While the main message of her speech remains the same, namely to call on political leaders but also major industrialists to take climate-friendly decisions by taking into account the opinion of science.

Take action. In most of Greta Thunberg's speeches, she says that "nothing has been done in the fight against climate change". She calls on leaders to take decisions without specifying those but calls on leaders to take into account the work and follow the recommendations of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). According to her, and according to her supporters, nothing has been done and on the contrary, the leaders are wasting their time on

¹⁰ A critical phenomenon in Sweden

something else. For her, and this is a demonstration of the articulation between her narrative and her political discourse, only climate action is political action.

Act immediately. Decisions must be taken immediately because there is an urgent need for action. In fact, it imposes the term climate emergency or climate crisis. This is a second evolution since the use of "climate change" to replace "global warming". This "crisis" implies an urgent need to react. Maybe that is a limit to her speech: political action is more difficult and complex than simple decision-making or a series of decisions.

Media coverage. After an effective use of social networks, the media coverage was generally very favourable to Greta Thunberg and focuses on her personality, virulence and success rather than on the core of her message. Nevertheless, it is understood and increasingly appropriate.

Greta's message called for awareness on the part of the population that the climate crisis and the urgency to act. The alarm call is all the more listened to as some climatic disturbances are felt such as heat waves during the summer, more and more frequent floods but also in cities the massive increase in cases of asthma among young children. This perception also leads to concern and a call to action among populations.

While Greta's message seems to be increasingly listened to and shared, it should also be noted that she has emulated in other European countries, where her call for a school strike has been heard. Indeed, several European countries have experienced youth movements since autumn 2018. School strikes for the climate were inspired by Greta Thunberg and are organized differently in different countries.

2) Description of the different movements (Climate walks, Fridays for future)

Following Greta Thunberg's call, a number of movements are emerging in other European countries, in particular, Belgium, with the *Youth for Climate* movement.

Youth for climate: a Belgian movement that has not taken off elsewhere

In Belgium, Anuna de Wever¹¹ (born in 2001) and her friend Kyra Gantois¹² launched the *Youth for climate* movement on Facebook and organised the first school strikes for the climate in Flanders and climate marches from the Central Station to protest outside the Flemish Parliament in Brussels¹³. For *Youth for climate*, young people demonstrate because they cannot vote.

The participants are young teenagers pursuing their secondary education in Flanders, they leave their school after the first hour of school, take the train to Brussels, demonstrate and come back for the last hour of school.

Soon, the movement spread to the¹⁴ rest of Belgium and young Walloons demonstrated with young Flemish¹⁶ people. In addition, the demonstrations that initially took place on Thursdays shifted to Fridays for coordination purposes.

According to the figures, only in Belgium are there regular events (once a week) that are numerically significant in terms of participants. In addition, since the young demonstrators are peaceful, they benefit from the goodwill of the authorities and can continue their movement.

In France, on the other hand, the *Youth for Climate* movement attracts fewer participants than in Belgium¹⁷, which results in less frequent, less visible demonstrations but also modes of action seeking media attention, resulting in more violent punching actions.

¹¹ https://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2019/02/14/anuna-et-kyra-les-deux-heroines-des-marches-belges-pour-le-climat_5423339_3244.html

¹² https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anuna_De_Wever

¹³ Brussels is the capital of the Flemish Region

¹⁴ first strike, organised on 10 January 2019, brought together 3,000 students in Brussels. This figure increases rapidly from Thursday to Thursday, from 12,500 strikers on 17 January to 35,000 on 24 January.

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anuna_De_Wever#cite_note-4

¹⁵ <https://www.humo.be/humo-archief/398027/tweeling-anuna-luka-de-wever-17-overschilligheid-is-de-grootste-kwaal-van-onze-maatschappij>

¹⁶ https://www.rtbef.be/info/belgique/detail_anuna-de-wever-et-adelaide-charlier-deux-jeunes-a-la-tete-du-combat-pour-le-climat?id=10130448

¹⁷ <https://www.la-croix.com/Sciences-et-ethique/Environnement/Marche-jeunes-climat-On-continuer-mettre-pression-2019-05-24-1201024123>

<https://www.nouvelobs.com/planete/20190714.OBS15909/70-jeunes-pour-le-climat-occupent-un-mcdo-a-bordeaux.html>

*Fridays for future: a movement particularly present in Germany*¹⁸

Present and active in more than 100 countries, the Fridays for Future movement has gained considerable importance in Germany more than in other countries. Today there are more than 600 local groups active throughout Germany, communicating with each other through social networks.

As it happened in Belgium with *Youth for Climate*, the increasing participation in the movement's regular events shows the strong interest of young people in the climate.

It should be noted, however, that the mobilizations are greater in the Western Länder than in the Eastern Länder, which correspond to the former German Democratic Republic (GDR).

In the summer of 2019, youth camps are organised throughout Europe, and it is in Germany that the movement appears to be the most mobilising, but also the best organised and most politicised. In Germany, the Dortmund summer camp brings together about 1400 young people for several days during which they meet and work on the priorities of their movements. On the other hand, the Polish branch of the movement is struggling to mobilize: only twelve of its members are participating in the 700-person summer camp organized jointly with the school strike movements for the climate and Extinction Rebellion. There, the activists do not elaborate a political manifesto but organize media actions such as demonstrations in front of the coal mines. The Polish case confirms what we see in France, the fewer participants there are in the movement, the more "physical" the mode of operation.

In Germany, at the Dortmund camp, there are very strong links between the movement and political ecology. Many of its young people are supporters of the Greens, as is Luisa Neubauer, the leading figure of the movement, who is a member of the German Greens¹⁹. This proximity allows young people to welcome well-known personalities such as the Federal Government's

<https://www.nouvelobs.com/planete/20190714.OBS15909/70-jeunes-pour-le-climat-occupent-un-mcdo-a-bordeaux.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/086138-064-A/re-young-climate-strikers/>

¹⁹ https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2019/05/16/climat-luisa-neubauer-l-emergence-d-une-greta-thunberg-allemande_1725716

Climate Advisor Professor Christophe Schmidt. In addition, young people are taking up a number of proposals made by environmentalists, such as the introduction of a carbon tax and the general introduction of the polluter-pays principle. These latest proposals show a certain desire to punish those who pollute, in order to change their behaviour.

In other countries

The southern countries are not experiencing any episodes like the one we have seen in Belgium or Germany.

In Spain, the few demonstrations against climate change that have been recorded are irregular and few in number: they bring together only a small number of activists who are already convinced. Compared to other social movements (such as the one in favour of Catalonia's independence or Spain's unity), these mobilizations are insignificant.

In Italy, the situation is similar, although the green movement is a little more developed. Nevertheless, compared to the public meetings of the *Lega*, or the sardine movement that appeared in November 2019, environmental demonstrations are also insignificant.

Each of the national variations of the movements has leading figures for lack of a leader. These are movements with cowardly leadership. Also, the fact that there are more figureheads than leaders ranks these movements further to the left.

The figure of Greta has been emulated and it can be seen that most of these leading figures are young women of Greta's age, educated and schooled, of well-off social origin, with a solid family structure whose members are supporters²⁰. These leading figures are intended as examples to follow and promote alternatives, particularly on food, by being *vegan* for example, or by moving less²¹. The political struggle is mixed with a personal ethic put forward. The method also since social networks seem to have played a decisive role. In this sense, Greta and her emulators revealed the contrast between political leaders such as US President Donald

²⁰<https://daardaar.be/rubriques/societe/deux-flamandes-en-greve-scolaire-contre-le-rechauffement-climatique/>

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/02/activists-set-sail-across-the-atlantic-to-chile-to-demand-curbs-on-flying>

Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who by their behaviour show that societies were evolving faster than their leaders and political cycles. In the United States, despite the President's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, industrialists and companies are tackling the issue head-on, showing the gap between companies and their representatives. But it was the anti-climate change behaviour of two presidents that made Greta a symbol.

There is no homogeneous youth, either at the European and continental level or at the level of a country. The different young people take different, even opposite, paths that can even be conflicting.

It is not youth that is parading but only a part of youth. In most European countries where there has been an increase in the participation rate, it is noted that this increase also concerns young people who, according to surveys, have voted more than usual. According to the same surveys, the Greens are at the top of their preferences but remain in the minority.

Greta Thunberg, the icon she has become and the movements she has inspired are sometimes the subject of virulent criticism. But these criticisms, however judgmental they may be, do not come from other young people but from older generations. Other young people who choose different but not necessarily opposite paths become indifferent.

From then on, there is a double risk, that of not being heard and degenerating into a violent movement, and that of no longer being followed: more and more young people leaving this fight to other young people to choose another one.

What response have the Institutions given to this mobilization of part of the youth and to the electoral successes of environmentalists?

Part II Institutional Renewal and the Green Deal

A) Institutional renewal

Following the May elections, Heads of State and Government, European political parties and parliamentary groups are launching several rounds of negotiations on the distribution of positions for the next five years, both for top jobs at EU level (1) on which the members of the European Council must nominate and within the Parliament (2) where political groups play a more active role. In parallel with these negotiations on positions, further negotiations are underway on the work programme of the next Commission (3).

1) Top jobs in the EU.

In 2019, Parliament is not the only institution for which EU Heads of State and Government must appoint (through the European Council) a new President: this is the case for the European Commission (the mandate of the College of Commissioners chaired by Jean Claude Juncker since 2014 expires on 31 October 2019, it is necessary to find a successor to Luxembourgish), but also of the European Council (the mandate of Donald Tusk expires on 31 October), the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission and exceptionally in 2019 that of the Governor of the European Central Bank (the simultaneous end of Mario Draghi's mandate with that of the mandates of the other Presidents of Institutions includes the post of Governor of the European Central Bank in the negotiations). For the European Commission, as France (and subsequently the other Member States) refused to appoint the *spitzenkandidat* of the leading party (the Bavarian German Manfred Weber), none of the *spitzenkandidat* could be approved by Parliament, and the position of President of the Commission will be subject of concurrent negotiations with those on the other positions.

At the end of negotiations lasting several weeks, the Greens, who had put forward two candidates as *spitzenkandidat* for the presidency of the European Commission, did not obtain any of the positions of President of the Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, the Central Bank or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission.

With the appointment of Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, as Governor of the European Central Bank, this is the first time that a politician has been appointed to this position. Indeed, although she had only a short ministerial career, Mrs Lagarde remains a politician, and no one doubts that her membership of the EPP counted for her appointment to be accepted by Angela Merkel.

Although Christine Lagarde's appointment is an innovation, it can be noted that monetary policy was framed by the treaties and it is not surprising that the person who shapes it has left its mark: for ecologists, it is difficult to see what their monetary policy is. If no Green member had the profile to preside over the European Central Bank, it must be noted that this is the case for other positions such as that of President of the European Council, which is vested in a Head of Government, or that of High Representative, which is vested in a former Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The only position the ecologists could have claimed was the position of President of the European Parliament, but German Ska Keller's candidacy was unsuccessful, and the Greens preferred other positions of responsibility in the European Parliament.

2) Positions of responsibility in the European Parliament

From the day after the election and throughout June and July, parliamentary groups (whose chairmanships are negotiated between national delegations) also negotiate between themselves positions such as the Presidency of Parliament (and its vice-chairmen), chairmanship of parliamentary committees (and their vice-chairmen). During these negotiations, political balance (between conservatives, socialists, liberals and ecologists must be respected) is combined with geographical balance (East and West, North and South, founding countries and new Member States, small and large countries). Membership of a political group is as much valuable or even less valuable as nationality. In addition, the generational balance, and especially the seniority of the parliamentarian, counts as well as that of a gender balance. In these negotiations on the posts to be allocated within Parliament, the Greens, therefore, occupy a difficult position because most of their elected representatives come from Nordic/Germanic countries; as a result, their candidates meet fewer criteria than the others. The liberal group (in a similar position until recently) seems to have changed by now accepting the Spanish from *Ciudadanos* and the *Renaissance* list, whose profiles are less liberal.

Nevertheless, at the end of these negotiations, the Greens obtained the chairmanship of several parliamentary committees, including the one in charge of transport and tourism and the one in charge of the internal market. The committee in charge of the environment, which had been promised to the British liberal Chris Davies, was finally attributed to the French ex-ecologist Pascal Canfin.

The chairmanship of a parliamentary committee is a privileged position insofar as regular contacts with the committee secretariat guarantee broad coverage on all subjects; in addition, the parliamentarian gains greater visibility and control not only of the agenda but also of the physical chairmanship of the meetings. Nevertheless, the President's influence is limited, and the real power lies in the agreement between the coordinators of the two largest political groups: the S&D and the EPP. The chairmanship of a committee, by increasing visibility, is a marker of influence but does not do everything. The Green and Liberal groups are neither numerous enough nor geographically balanced enough to be as prominent as the EPP and S&D.

All in all, the Green Group is gaining not only in terms of votes but also in terms of the number of Members and positions of responsibility. At 10% of the seats, they are on a par with the ECR, ID and GUE groups. But while these groups are declining, the ecologists' group is the only one on the rise with the Liberals and are therefore in a strong position in programmatic negotiations.

3) Parliament's Work Programme

At the same time, a European Parliament political programme for the mandate of the new European Commission is being negotiated between different parliamentary groups (but not between European political parties) of the Parliament: the European People's Party (*EPP*), the Group of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the Alliance of European Liberals and Democrats (ALDE), and the Greens/ EFA. The European Conservative and Reformist groups, the Europe of Liberties and Direct Democracy, the European United Left, the Europe of Nations and Freedoms do not participate in these negotiations.

On 5 June, ten days after the election, and for the first time in European parliamentary history, the leaders of the four pro-European groups, i.e. agree on a negotiating timetable, in order to

produce a political programme "binding for the President-elect²²". This programme is composed of five chapters, each negotiated by two representatives of each political group.

Announced on 5 June, the first workshop begins on 13 June and was due to be completed on 20 June, the date of the European Council at which the President of the European Commission is to be appointed. This very tight schedule benefited the Greens, who were better prepared than the other groups, at preparatory meetings on 5 and 12 June.

From the first leaking versions, we see that climate change is the first concern: it appears first and has a large impact on others. The climate chapter is the one on which discussions stumble most with skepticism on the part of the EPP about the level of greenhouse gas reduction.

If the discussions fail, partly because of the EPP's refusal to resume negotiations after the *spitzenkandidat* Manfred Weber was side-lined, they have the advantage of making Parliament's voice heard on climate issues: indeed, the EPP's isolation has tipped the balance in favour of bringing social democrats, Liberals and environmentalists closer together. These three groups will be able to convince Mrs von der Leyen to take up some of their positions, such as the more than 50% drop, against her own political group.

This failure, if it is due more to an extraordinarily short deadline than to a lack of willingness to negotiate on the part of the stakeholders, will certainly have consequences for relations between the College of Commissioners and Parliament.

In conclusion, it can be said that the post-European election and institutional renewal were not an opportunity for environmentalists to transform the test of their electoral success: the Greens did not obtain any of the EU's top jobs and only a few key positions in the European Parliament. Nevertheless, they seem to have succeeded in gaining sufficient influence in the negotiations to ensure that their ideas have a sufficient impact on Parliament's position, which leads to their inclusion in the programmatic speech of the President-designate of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen.

²² Communiqué from the four groups, June 5, 2019

B) The Commission response

On 15 July 2019, the day of her election by the European Parliament in Strasbourg, President-designate Ursula von der Leyen delivered a keynote speech. In other announcements, it announces a *Green Deal*, which will be implemented within 100 days of the establishment of the new College of European Commissioners²³.

1) The Green Deal : A response and a project

Inspiration. The Green Deal is above all a double reference: the one to green being the colour of political ecology and on behalf of the main political party to wear it, but also to the *New Deal set up in 1933* by President Roosevelt during the first hundred days of his mandate (1933-1945) which made it possible to stop the effects of the 1929 economic and financial crisis and to start a new growth cycle. In the recent past, several ambitious projects were already called "Green New Deal". In Great Britain in 2011, at the *initiation* of David Cameron's Conservative government, the British Parliament passed a law on energy transition. It is within the framework of this strategy that a vast plan to renovate housing in order to improve energy efficiency was launched a year later, in 2012. More recently in the United States, the Green Deal is a project led by, among others, representative Alexandra Ocasio Cortez, in a bid to oppose President Donald Trump's environmental policy.

Thus, the expression of the "Green Deal" is like a label that is applied to a political project but that encompasses different realities. So, what is the particularity of Mrs von der Leyen's project?

An answer and a priority. In her speech, she made this Green Deal a direct response to the concerns of young people and their mobilization. In Mrs van der Leyen's plea for her *Green Deal*, she makes it her response to the aspirations of young people by making it an identifiable project, to be carried out within a short period of time (barely three months including a two-week break for the Christmas and New Year holidays), which makes this very ambitious. By making it the very first priority of its action at the head of the European Commission, it seems

²³ Initially scheduled for November 1, 2019, this should finally take place on December 1, 2019, or even January 1, 2020.

to take into account the message expressed by the younger generation. Does this mean that these proposals are completely new or that they are based on the proposals of the environmental parties?

2) A comprehensive set of initiatives

The Green Deal is above all a complement to a commitment to a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere²⁴, and in particular carbon dioxide, by moving towards a "de-carbonised Europe". Ursula von der Leyen says that "she wants Europe to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050."²⁵ By going further than the objectives set by the Paris Agreement on the reduction of gases to 40%, which it considers insufficient, public action must go further and it undertakes to increase the reduction of greenhouse gases to 50% or even 55%. In November 2018, the European Commission had already announced its strategy for a carbon-neutral Europe. It is interesting to note that Mrs von der Leyen, like the European public action, focuses on carbon dioxide emissions and excludes methane, which is also a greenhouse gas, more dangerous in some respects than carbon dioxide, and other greenhouse gases. She also adds that her first law will be a climate law to make the objective of neutrality a legal obligation.

This Green Deal is also intended to be a project encompassing several initiatives, some of which have already been launched by the European Commission. On the one hand, the President elect wants to launch a vast investment plan for sustainable development (estimated at around €1,000 billion) and by "converting part of the European Investment Bank into a Climate Bank".

Mrs von der Leyen wants to introduce a carbon price on the one hand and the introduction of a carbon tax at the border of the single market on the other. She also wants to extend the Emission Trading System to the maritime sector and end the exemptions for the aviation sector. These exemptions are expected to end in 2023 when Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) comes into force. In addition, to ensure the competitiveness of European companies, she wants to introduce a carbon tax at the border to prevent carbon leakage.

²⁴ Speech to the European Parliament

²⁵ Ibid.

Mrs von der Leyen's action is in line with the Union's recent action: single-use plastics, for which the directive identifying and banning the ten most polluting products was adopted in 2018. Mrs von der Leyen wants to go further by now tackling the micro-plastic present in the oceans.

She also wants to strengthen the European circular economy, focusing on the sustainable use of resources, particularly in the construction and textile sectors.

In parallel with the Green Deal, the Commission President's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is reflected in all her mission letters to the Commissioners-designate²⁶. Thus, beyond the Green Deal and the fight against climate change, the Commission is taking the road to sustainable development.

In the European Parliament, the consideration of the climate issue goes beyond the debates on receiving the Green Deal: the negotiations on the 2020 annual budget take into account the climate issue for the first time, and MEPs acknowledge that they lack effective tools.

Longstanding proposals such as the inclusion of clauses calling for compliance with the 2015 Paris Agreement in the European Union's trade treaties with third countries or entities. This proposal, excluded from the Green Deal, had already been made : shortly after the signature of the agreement with Mercosul, Brazil (a member of Mercosul) should respect the Paris Agreement in the context of the conclusion of the agreement. Compliance with the Paris Agreement as a condition for the ratification of²⁷the Free Trade Agreement with Mercosul came back into the debate on the occasion of the fires in the Amazon and the reaction of the Government of Brazil at the end of August 2019. In early September, some MEPs went even further by pushing for the suspension of existing trade with Brazil. Thus, the idea that compliance with the Paris Agreement is a condition for the establishment of future trade relations has been extended to existing trade relations. This is undoubtedly due in large part to the collective emotion generated by the images of the burning Amazon. Is this possible? In

²⁶ Letter of mission to Commissioner Designate Timmermans

²⁷, In this case, it is rather the entry into force because the treaty is already signed by the States and should partially enter into force. Being a mixed treaty, i.e. dealing with Member States' competences as well as the EU's competences.

Parliament, this is one of the most controversial points, particularly within the Liberal Democrat Group, which has doubts about its feasibility.

Ursula von der Leyen's Green Deal is a response to the mobilization of young people, but this action initiated can only be effective in a longer period of time. Indeed, the adoption of legislative acts as part of legislative procedures is a long process. In addition, there are procedures for adopting implementing acts and then finally transposing them... Young people were calling for immediate action, it is not certain that the European Union, although it is a machine for producing public policies and shaping market rules, is the ideal forum for achieving this objective.

The Green deal, by taking over existing initiatives or simply going further into policies already pursued by the EU, is a continuation of the work of the previous mandate and the Juncker Commission. It is neither a break nor an ecological turning point.

The mixed reception of the Green Deal by the most greenhouse gas emitting countries, particularly the countries of the Visegrad Group, shows two things: the cleavage seen above in electoral behaviour and in the mobilisation of young people is reflected in the position of governments in the Council but also among parliamentarians. Thus, within the liberal group, the elected representatives of Central Europe are the most reluctant and the least committed.

Europe, therefore, continues to tackle the effects of climate change by doing what it can, but it cannot do the impossible and does not intend to be an ecological continent. Political ecology, which is broader in its ambitions, requires a greater transition and a change in human behaviour rather than a change in political orientation.

3) *The achievement of the Green Deal*

To achieve this Green Deal, it was necessary to entrust this task to a Commissioner with a broad portfolio and an experienced, competent and respected personality. This is the case with Frans Timmermans²⁸, who, after having been the first Vice-President of the Juncker Commission,

²⁸ Letter of mission to Commissioner Designate Timmermans

successfully carried the colours of the Party of European Socialists as a *spitzenkandidat*²⁹. If Mr Timmermans narrowly missed the presidency of the Commission, he is called upon to become the first Executive Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the Green Deal. As an innovation compared to the current situation, it will have under its supervision the Directorate-General for Climate Action. In this way, it is given political authority but also the institutional means to initiate public policies. By reflection, the (smaller) environmental portfolio is entrusted to a less known and less experienced but very promising profile: the young Lithuanian Minister of Economy Virginijus Sinkevičius³⁰. In particular, the latter will be responsible for the common fisheries policy, the next revision of which is scheduled for 2023. The Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Policy will be responsible for most European policies aimed at protecting the environment. But the choice of this profile shows that there will be continuity in this area and that most of the work will be done by the Directorates-General and that there will be less room for political initiative. This difference in the profile is an indicator but does not explain everything. The fight against climate change undoubtedly calls for different modes of action than simply protecting the environment and ecosystems.

To achieve her Green Deal, Ursula von der Leyen will have to engage the services of the European Commission but above all overcome the divisions of the Member States that obviously manifest themselves in the Council but also in Parliament between the national delegations within the political groups themselves. Apart from the Greens, it is to be expected that the positions of the S&D, EPP and Renew groups are compromised or even synthesis positions and are only the lowest common denominator. As we have seen, the divisions caused by climate are more of a national order than a political one.

Beyond the decision-making process, which will lead to the adoption of policies, Member States will have to be counted on to implement such measures. Divided, EU Member States could use the room for manoeuvre left by the instruments to go further or further. This raises the question of the relevance of the European political system to respond to this call. Are the European political institutions with these complex decision-making processes appropriate to

²⁹ The Dutch Labour Party achieved one of these high electoral scores

³⁰ Letter of mission to Commissioner Designate Sinkevičius

address this concern? The European Union can take initiatives on climate change by coordinating these environmental preservation policies.

Did the youth movements against climate change and the European elections started an ecological shift in the European Union ?

The European elections have shown that the establishment of political ecology is structurally asymmetrical: ecological parties are significantly present in only a limited number of countries and almost absent in the others. They are thus only able to achieve high electoral scores in a few countries, but rarely participate in governments because of their position in the respective national political arena: in Germany, the Grünen left the federal government in 2005, and in France, Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts only participated in the Government between 2012 and 2014. Finally, the ecologist parties were only a supporting political force. This is the main feature of this election for France and Germany: for the first time, the environmentalist parties took the lead over the social-democratic and socialist parties. However, the latter have not disappeared and still have a rebound capacity. The vote in favour of the green parties was not an usual vote. At the European level, the Green parties has gained weight but has not replaced the other parties.

The youth movements that took shape in the year preceding the election confirm this asymmetry. While Greta Thunberg's call for a school strike for the Climate was heard everywhere and demonstrations took place in all European countries, the fact remains that these demonstrations brought together a significant number of demonstrators only in a limited number of countries. In most countries, there are very few participants in these strikes. These are generally young people who are already active in ecologist parties or environmental organisations. This movement is therefore deeply asymmetrical.

Climate youth movements are neither the movement of one generation nor (consequently) that of one generation against another. On the one hand, it is not a generational movement either, since not all young people are represented. Indeed, it is only a part of the youth: the one who goes to high school, and who has the cultural capital to understand and integrate into their demands the complex and abstruse work of the IPCC but also of other scientific organizations. On the other hand, it is not a movement of one generation against another since young demonstrators are listened to and supported by their parents. In most climate demonstrations, young strikers are joined by "classic" environmental activists, who influence the demands. In addition to the demand for concrete climate action, there is increasingly a criticism of the capitalist model emerging from the market economy. This is what Greta Thunberg said at the

climate summit on the side-lines of the United Nations General Assembly³¹. While criticism of the economic model is increasingly explicit, the political model and its functioning are being questioned indirectly: consequently, the impact of the European Institutions will be limited insofar as it will not be able to fully respond to the call to action of youth movements.

While youth movements are part of democratic life, they nonetheless challenge some aspects of it. On the one hand, the demonstrations are intended to be decoupled from the electoral processes. The young demonstrators themselves say it themselves: "they are demonstrating because they cannot vote": the right to demonstrate is therefore at best a second-best to the right to vote, at worst an alternative. If they don't get what they want through the ballot box, they demonstrate. On the other hand, they criticize the way democracies operate, both internally (parliamentary representativeness) and in the way they interact (diplomacy).

Measures should be taken, and actions implemented without parliamentary debate. Action against change because of its essential importance would take precedence over all other social and political considerations. In addition, the urgency of the problem calling for immediate action means that measurement, debate and negotiation are excluded. In addition, and beyond the method, it is the ecological transition project that is being called into question. Indeed, the transition by its transient aspect is intrinsically incompatible with the urgency of the cause. For example, in the context of the energy transition, the use of nuclear energy by some countries, producing low-carbon and economic energy, is the subject of historical mistrust on the part of environmental parties due to the treatment of radioactive waste, while IPCC reports argue that nuclear energy will have a role to play in the energy transition. Moreover, this questioning also concerns the relations between democracies: international summits such as the conferences of the parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would not lead to anything. Here too, there would no longer be any possible debate and it would be necessary to "act", without negotiation and without debate. In fact, because climate change has become a climate "crisis" or "emergency", the means of action against change have become ineffective and inadequate.

³¹ Greta Thunberg, Speech at the UN, 23 September 2019

Does the European Union, therefore, have the means of action to respond to this concern and initiate change? Beyond its limited impact within the Institutions (and in particular the European Parliament), the good score of the ecologist parties seems to have been taken into account by the other parties which seem to be raising their ambitions and by the other Institutions. The fight against climate change (if not the main concern of Europeans) became in 2019 the priority of European public action and the cardinal project of the Union for the next five years.

Does the Union, in responding to this call, formulate a response to the demands of young people? It's hard to say. The demands of young people were vague, to say the least, the main one being the call for awareness on the part of society and call for action on the part of political decision-makers. It has been done. But young people did not address the European Institutions. In fact, each of the youth demonstration movements expressed itself in specific public spaces: the movement born in Belgium was addressed to the Flemish Parliament while the movements in Germany took place in the capitals of the Länder. Will the institutions' response be listened to and perceived by young people?

The European institutions can only function through compromise and debate, i.e. the antithesis of what young people are demanding. It is also difficult to respond to young people because the Union if it produces policies, does not necessarily implement those: Member States are in charge of them.

Is this the beginning of an ecological shift? Nothing could be less certain. Ecology is broader than the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change. It carries within it an alternative project to the Western way of life and capitalist societies. Some, like the French philosopher André Gorz, see ecology not as a new way of seeing the human being in his environment, but as a way of reviewing the relationships that men can have with each other. Ecology is in this respect an alternative society project that would take over from socialism. This explains why political ecology is developing at the expense of social democracy.

Unless political ecology emerges as an alternative societal project, the fight against climate change can be seen as a political project shared between the Union and its members in which each individual and each of the Institutions, to the extent of their competences, can participate. It can also be an element of a European power by making the Union a global player. Indeed,

climate change is inherently global and calls for a global strategy. But the countries of the South, which, when it comes to accessing the consumer goods that generations have spent years putting in place, will find it difficult to accept that they have to give them up.

Greta Thunberg, through the symbol she represents and the icon she has become, has inspired millions of young people around the world. By demonstrating regularly, they have helped adults to raise awareness and put the fight against climate change on the public policy agenda. Nevertheless, it remains a divisive subject and the challenge remains to make it something that brings people together.