



## **Who holds the power in the EP committees and the bureau?**

*VoteWatch Europe special policy brief*

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This special policy brief looks at the allocation of committee chairmanships and EP bureau posts since the 2004 EU enlargement until today. It shows that, as in the previous 10 years, the biggest and older Member States still hold the majority of the EP committees' chairs positions. However, this representation gap between big/small and old/new Member States has substantially declined after the 2014 European elections, as a result of a combination of factors including the rise of anti-EU parties in 'old' EU.

As regards political groups' representation, the elections have not generated significant changes in the chairmanship of the committees. Moreover, it looks like each of the main political group has particular preferences as to what committees to chair. These preferences are consistent over time.

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## Abbreviations

<b>ALDE</b>	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
<b>ECR</b>	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
<b>EFDD</b>	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EPP</b>	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>Greens/EFA</b>	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
<b>GUE-NGL</b>	Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left
<b>MEP(s)</b>	Member(s) of the European Parliament
<b>NI</b>	Non-attached Members
<b>S&amp;D</b>	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

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***VoteWatch Europe** is an independent organisation set up to promote better debates and greater transparency in EU decision-making, by providing easy access to, and analysis of, the votes and other activities of the European Parliament (EP) and the EU Council of Ministers (Council). VoteWatch uses the EU Institutions' own attendance, voting and activity data - available through their websites - to give a full overview of MEP and Member State activities.*

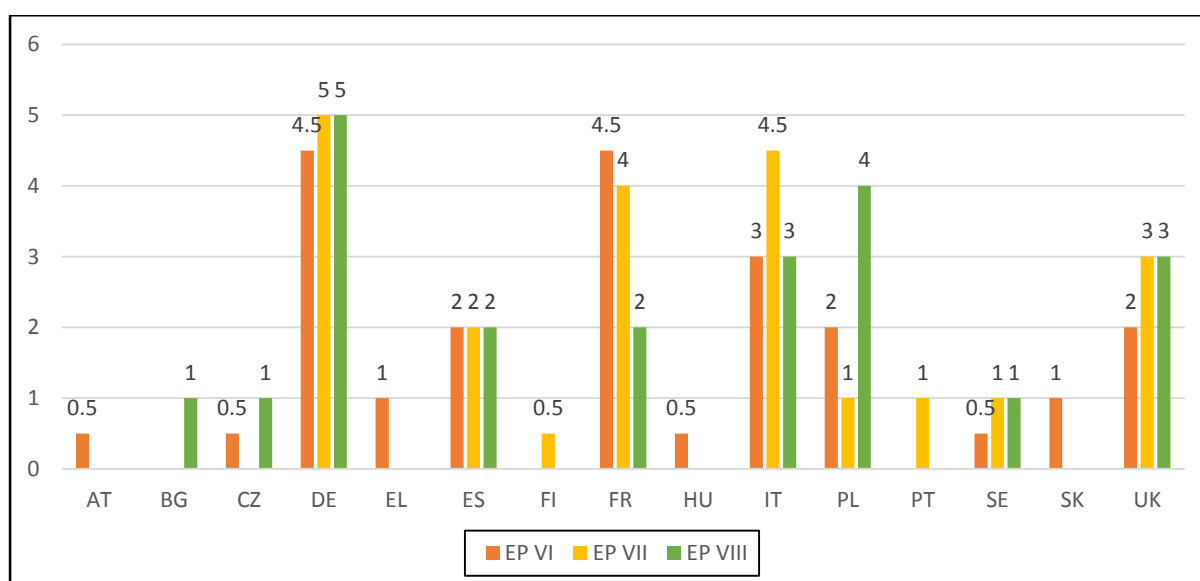
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## 1. EP committee chairmanship: (no longer) only for 'old' Europe'?

In the previous European Parliament, the EP7, only one committee chair came from a 'new' EU Member State that joined in 2004/2007. The new EP has turned out to be very different: Polish MEPs will now chair three EP committees (as well as the Conference of Committee Chairs) and one subcommittee, while Czechs and Bulgarians will each have one chair<sup>1</sup>.

The allocation of committee chairs is decided, informally, in two steps: first, between the political groups, and then within the political groups, between the national party delegations. On both occasions, the *D'Hondt* method is used as an objective starting basis, after which negotiations take place.

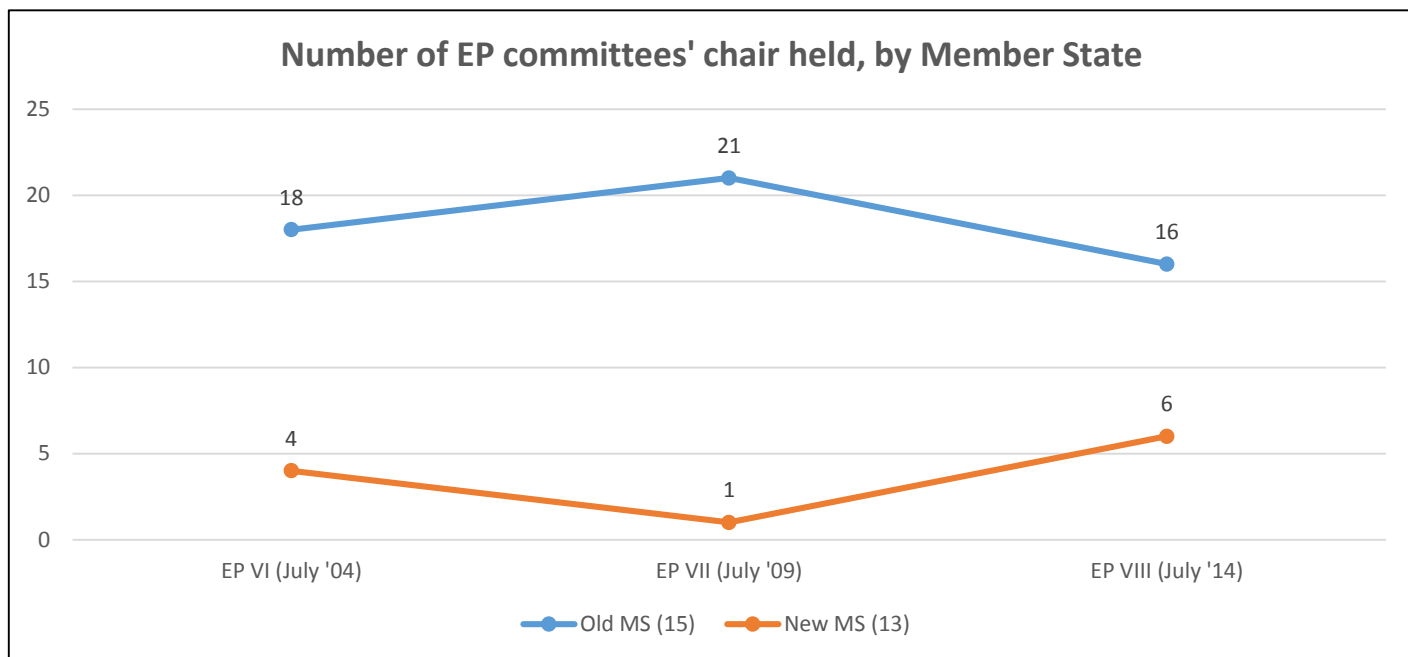


The country-by-country analysis shows that Germany is still the best represented country, currently having five EP committee chairs (in addition to the EP President and two EP Vice-Presidents). From among the big and 'old' Member States, the United Kingdom and Italy now have three chairs, while Spain and France have two each.

France appears as the country losing most influence as regards the repartition of EP committees' chairs. While in the past two legislative terms France had at least four committees' chairs, this time around France will only have two.

Finally, Bulgaria and Czech Republic got one EP committee chair each. This makes six chairmanships for the new member states compared to the outgoing EU Parliament where they held only one.

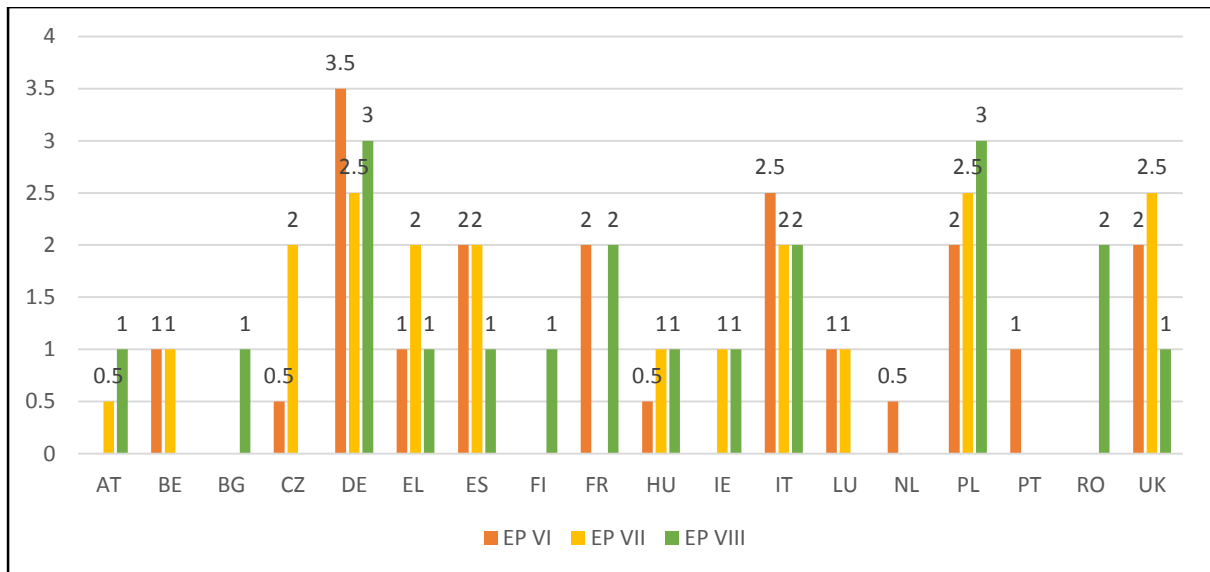
<sup>1</sup> Jerzy Buzek (EPP, Poland) - Committee on Industry, Research and Energy; Czesław Adam Siekierski (EPP, Poland) - Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development; Danuta Maria Hübner (EPP, Poland) - Committee on Constitutional Affairs; Anna Elżbieta Fotyga (ECR, Poland) - Subcommittee on Security and Defence; Pavel Svoboda (EPP, Czech Republic) - Committee on Legal Affairs; Iskra Mihaylova (EPP, Bulgaria) - Committee on Regional Development.



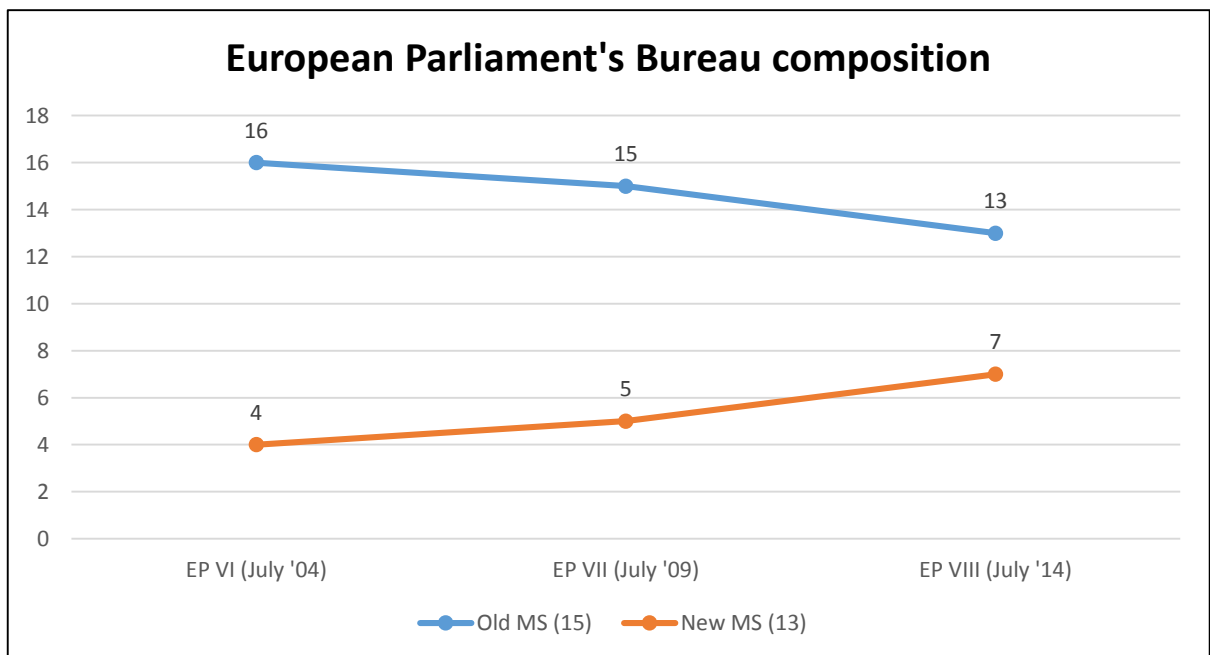
## 2. Composition of the EP Bureau

The EP bureau for 2014-2017 includes three Polish, two Romanian, one Hungarian and one Bulgarian MEP.<sup>2</sup> What can explain this development? On the one hand, the greater experience in the Parliament of the MEPs from 'new Europe' is likely to have contributed to the change. On the other hand, the result of the 2014 EP elections, which has significantly weakened centrist delegations in big and 'old' Member States has most likely also played a role. An example is how Romania has obtained two posts of EP Vice-President for the first time since its EU membership, meaning it is on par with Italy and France.

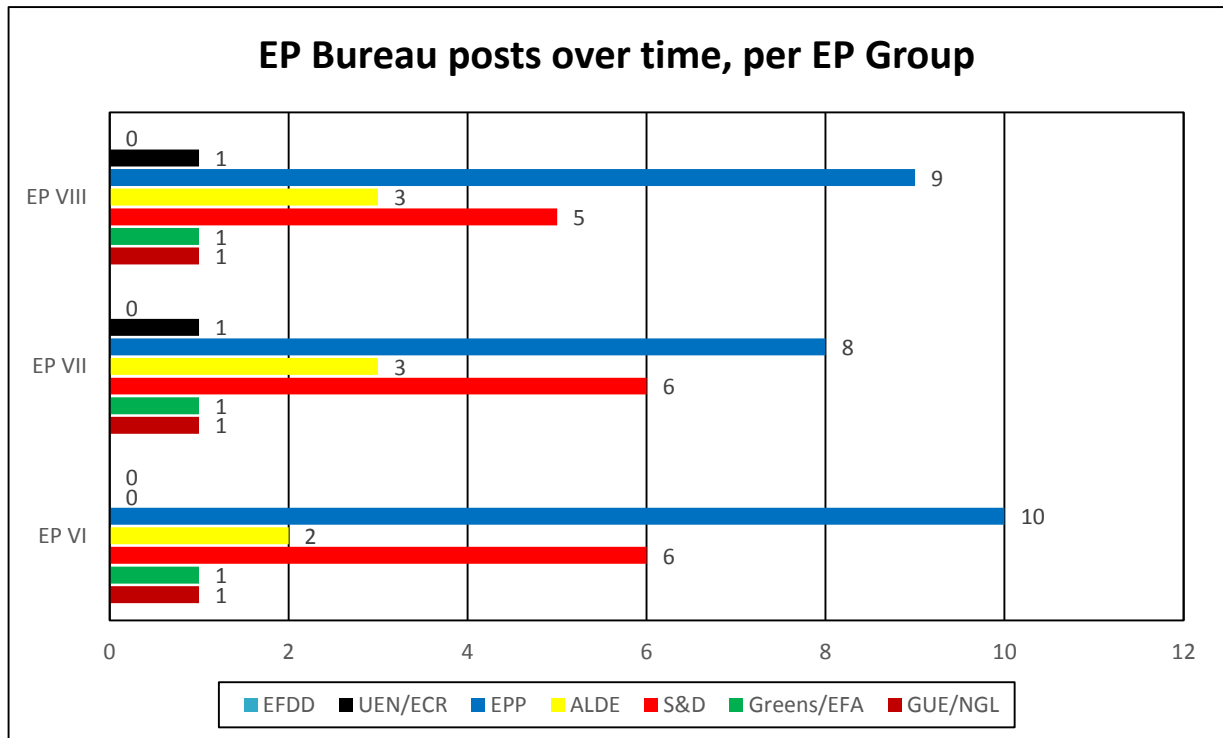
<sup>2</sup> Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR, Poland), Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D, Poland), Karol Adam Karski (ECR, Poland), Adina-Ioana Vălean (EPP, Romania), Corina Crețu (S&D, Romania), Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (EPP, Hungary) and Andrey Kovatchev (EPP, Bulgaria).



The figure below shows the constant increase of the number of positions held by MEPs from the new Member States in the EP Bureau.



The following figure shows the share of EP Bureau posts by EP Group. There have not been great changes over time: the two main groups, EPP and S&D, share the biggest part of the bureau posts, followed by the ALDE Group.



### 3. Which EP groups prefer which EP committees?

Looking at which EP group gets which EP committee chairs, there have not been significant changes compared to the previous EP terms. Moreover, each EP group seems to have its key preferences, reasons for which only few EP committees have shifted from the left to the right or the other way around in the new EP.

Despite its relatively large decline in MEP seats, The European People's Party group (EPP) lost only two committee chairs compared to the previous term. The EPP will continue to chair the Foreign Affairs Committee as well as the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and on Legal affairs. The EPP Group has chaired these committees since 2004, showing a special interests in these areas. However, the EPP Group has lost the chairs of the Regional Development and the Budgets committees, but regained the chairs of the Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries committees.

Compared to the previous EP, the Socialists and Democrats Group (S&D) obtained an additional committee chair. The S&D Group will continue to chair the International Trade Committee, as it did for the past two terms. Moreover, the S&D Group has frequently chaired committees responsible for employment and social policy and workers' right, as well as for culture and education. Finally, the S&D Group takes over the chair of the key Economic Affairs Committee.

The Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) will continue chairing the key Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, while also gaining the chair of the Security and Defence subcommittee, as a result of the group's increased strength after the 2014 EP elections

As regard the other EP groups, the Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) obtained three chairmanships despite its smaller size compared to the past term. The ALDE Group will be chairing two key committees: Regional Development and Budgets, confirming their interest for EP committees responsible for shaping the EU budget.

## Annex I: Composition of EP Bureau, by nationality

	EP Bureau composition, by nationality					
	EP VI		EP VII		EP VII	
	2004-2007	2007-2009	2009-2012	2012-2014	2014 - 2017	2017 - 2019
<b>AT</b>				1 vice-president	1 vice-president	
<b>BE</b>	1 quaestor	1 quaestor	1 vice-president	1 vice-president		
<b>BG</b>					1 quaestor	
<b>CY</b>						
<b>CZ</b>	1 vice-president		1 vice-president + 1 quaestor	1 vice-president + 1 quaestor		
<b>DE</b>	3 vice-president + 1 quaestor	1 president + 1 vice-president + 1 quaestor	2 vice-president	1 president + 2 vice-president	1 president + 2 vice-president	
<b>DK</b>						
<b>EE</b>						
<b>EL</b>	1 vice-president	1 vice-president	2 vice-president	2 vice-president	1 vice-president	
<b>ES</b>	1 president + 1 vice-president	2 vice-president	2 vice-president	2 vice-president	1 vice-president	
<b>FI</b>					1 vice-president	
<b>FR</b>	2 vice-president	2 vice-president			1 vice-president + 1 quaestor	
<b>HU</b>		1 quaestor			1 vice-president	
<b>HR</b>			1 vice-president	1 vice-president		
<b>IE</b>			1 quaestor	1 quaestor	1 vice-president	
<b>IT</b>	2 vice-president	3 vice-president	2 vice-president	2 vice-president	2 vice-president	
<b>LV</b>						
<b>LT</b>						
<b>LU</b>	1 quaestor	1 quaestor	1 quaestor	1 quaestor		
<b>MT</b>						
<b>NL</b>		1 quaestor				
<b>PL</b>	2 vice-president + 1 quaestor	1 quaestor	1 president + 1 quaestor	1 vice-president + 2 quaestor	1 vice-president + 2 quaestors	
<b>PT</b>	1 vice-president	1 vice-president				
<b>RO</b>					2 vice-president	
<b>SI</b>						
<b>SK</b>						
<b>SE</b>						
<b>UK</b>	1 vice-president + 1 quaestor	1 vice-president + 1 quaestor	3 vice-president + 1 quaestor	1 vice-president	1 quaestor	



## Annex II: EP Committee chairmanship, by nationality

	<b>EP <u>Committees</u> chairs, by nationality</b>					
	<b>EP VI</b>		<b>EP VII</b>		<b>EP VIII</b>	
	<b>2004-2007</b>	<b>2007-2009</b>	<b>2009-2012</b>	<b>2012-2014</b>	<b>2014 - 2017</b>	<b>2017 - 2019</b>
<b>AT</b>		1				
<b>BE</b>						
<b>BG</b>					1	
<b>CY</b>						
<b>CZ</b>		1			1	
<b>DE</b>	4	5	4	6	5	
<b>DK</b>						
<b>EE</b>						
<b>EL</b>	1	1				
<b>ES</b>	2	2	2	2	2	
<b>FI</b>			1			
<b>FR</b>	5	4	4	4	2	
<b>HU</b>	1					
<b>HR</b>						
<b>IE</b>						
<b>IT</b>	4	2	5	4	3	
<b>LV</b>						
<b>LT</b>						
<b>LU</b>						
<b>MT</b>						
<b>NL</b>						
<b>PL</b>	2	2	1	1	4	
<b>PT</b>			1	1		
<b>RO</b>						
<b>SI</b>						
<b>SK</b>	1	1				
<b>SE</b>		1	1	1	1	
<b>UK</b>	2	2	3	3	3	