

# Who is who?

on the EU-critical right of centre



*This report provides descriptions of right of centre political parties that take a critical stance towards the EU (excluding EU-critical EPP affiliated parties). Some of the parties want to reform the EU into another type of cooperative body, while other parties just would like to tinker on the edges; lastly some of the parties are outright withdrawalist and wish to leave the EU. The introductory descriptions of the parties are indicative at best and only reflect the views of the author.*

Richard Byfält, 2018

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## Austria

**The Freedom Party of Austria** (German: Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ)

*Populist, Pragmatist, EU-reformers, Immigration and Islam critical*

Today Austrian Eurosceptic voters in most part give their support to the FPÖ. The macro trend in Austrian politics has been the shift from a bi-polar ÖVP-SPÖ dominated political scene to a multi-polar ÖVP-FPÖ-SPÖ dominated landscape. The last unpopular grand coalition between the ÖVP and SPÖ led to the election of Sebastian Kurz as ÖVP leader and the eventual coalition with FPÖ.

Unlike when Haider's FPÖ supported the ÖVP government of Wolfgang Schüssel in the early 2000's the party's current participation in government has led to mild critique abroad. In fact there has been an opening by some European establishment parties towards the FPÖ after FPÖ and ÖVP formed a government in 2017.

After their participation in government became public some foreign parties tried to incentivise the FPÖ to break with its Le Pen affiliation through the ENF-group in the European Parliament as well as Harald Vilimsky's role in the MENL party at European level. Recently the ACRE party at European level (the party of the ECR group) has appeared in public with FPÖ MEP Barbara Kappel, though it is unclear if the FPÖ is interested in ending the ENF-MENL relationship at this time.

The FPÖ has a long tradition of supporting and helping to establish EU-critical groupings in the European Parliament for example the Identity Tradition Sovereignty group in 2007 and parties at European level. The FPÖ has, however, ended cooperation with some of its most radical allies from the past (Attack from Bulgaria and Bremen based Bürger in Wut were members of the FPÖ backed European Alliance for Freedom party at European level that ceased to exist in 2016).

Internationally the FPÖ has been criticized for the party's five-year cooperation agreement signed with United Russia, the party of President Putin, in 2016. Although little concrete seems to have come from the agreement it solidifies the perceived ties to Russia dating back to Haider's days in charge of the party.

FPÖ is likely to increase or at least retain its number of seats in the upcoming European Parliament election as the party is polling around 24% nationally which is above the 19% result achieved by the party in 2014. Current poll numbers are about five percentage points below the 2017 election result which could indicate some dissent among FPÖ voters.

## EU-STOP list & EU-Austrittspartei für Österreich (EUAUS)

### *EU-withdrawal, Direct Democracy, Neutrality*

EUAUS formed the EU-STOP list at the European Parliament elections 2014 together with Bündnis Neutrales Freies Österreich. They received 2,7% of the vote in the 2014 EP elections. EUAUS is headed by the publisher of alternative Vienna news site, wien-kurier.at and can be described as an a-political list of EU-opponents from the left to the right of the Austrian political spectrum. It is unlikely that the EU-STOP list will succeed in the 2019 European Parliament elections, though a moderation of the FPÖ's EU-critique following government participation could lead the most EU-critical voters to seek alternatives to support.

Other EU-critical parties in Austria are **BZÖ** (Bundnis Zukunft Österreich) founded by Jörg Haider in 2006 as a moderate splinter party from the FPÖ. The BZÖ was Haider's personal party project and it ruled the province of Carinthia for a decade. The BZÖ has not succeeded and has lost all electoral strongholds following the death of Haider, today it retains two regional MP's in Carinthia. The last BZÖ MEP Ewald Stadler tried to run for the European Parliament in 2014 under the REKOS (Die Reformkonservativen) banner and received 1,18% of the vote. It is unlikely the BZÖ or REKOS will contest the 2019 European Parliament elections.

From 2012-2017 a group in the Austrian Federal Parliament existed called **Team Stronach**. The group was founded by billionaire auto-industrialist Frank Stronach who won over MP's from the SPÖ, BZÖ, FPÖ and others later establishing a party as well. Team Stronach polled up to 8% proposing a programme that included a 20% flat tax, reduced bureaucracy and a balanced budget. Stronach called the euro a monstrosity but failed to translate the millions invested into a sustainable political movement. The group dissolved in 2017 and is unlikely to attempt a comeback.

## Belgium

**Flemish Interest** (Flemish: Vlaams Belang, VB)

*Identitarian, Anti-Islam & Immigration, pro-Flemish independence, Anti-EU*

Vlaams Belang is a populist and nationalist party with roots in the Flemish independence movement. At European level the party's closest contacts are to the PVV of Geert Wilders and the RN (previously Front National) of Marine Le Pen in France. As such their MEP's have been part of the ENF group since its creation, and its affiliated MENL party at European level. Aside from MEP Annemans, the VB is represented in the Belgian Senate, Chamber of Representatives and Flemish as well as Brussels regional parliaments.

After a long legal process a Belgian appeals court in 2004 ruled that three associations affiliated with the Vlaams Belang (then Vlaams Blok) had violated the 'Moureaux' law against racism and xenophobia by producing PR material that advocated systematic discrimination based on race. The party associations were fined while the party used the trial, appeal and re-trial as a rebranding exercise highlighting its recently changed statutes and launching its new name.

Vlaams Belang rid itself of some of its baggage from its previous constitution and nowadays describes itself as nationalist party on the right committed to achieving independence for Flanders with Brussels as its capital. The party has also turned to the right economically, removing calls for solidarity from prominence in its constitution, however Vlaams Belang remains an identitarian political movement, focusing on issues such as immigration and Islam while the Flemish question, the EU and other issues are side-lined in day to day political activities.

Its stance on immigration was softened following the 2004 ruling to no longer call for forced repatriation of all immigrants instead calling for "repatriation of those who reject, deny or combat our culture and certain European values such as separation of Church and state, liberty of expression, and equality between men and women". The changes of name and statutes were done to ensure the party would remain eligible for Belgian state party funding.

Although the party in 2014 elected its youth party leader as chairman, the shadow of the party's long standing and most prominent parliamentarian Filip DeWinter looms large. DeWinter still represents the party at foreign events such as the 2018 #FreeTommy rallies and regularly makes outlandish statements to gain publicity, such as recently sharing an anonymous Facebook post that promised a dead-or-alive reward of 100 000 EUR for an Antwerp drug-dealer.

The 2018 local election slogan of the VB is "our people first".

**The People's Party** (French: Parti populaire, PP)

*Populist, Anti-establishment, pro-Trump, EU-critical*

Parti Populaire is a francophone populist and anti-establishment party founded in 2009 that has positioned itself to the right of the establishment Mouvement Réformateur party in Wallonia. It describes itself as a "citizen's movement that aims to revive Brussels and Wallonia by restoring order and common sense." The PP has since its inception grown its activist and voter base successfully by appealing to the right-of-centre voter in Wallonia on issues like immigration while remaining cognizant of the left-leaning electorate's views on economic issues. The PP has a significant online presence in French-speaking Belgium, including a successful online news portal *Le Peuple*.

The PP has benefited from high profile legal cases its leader Mischaël Modrikamen has involved himself in. For example in 2013, Modrikamen took on RTL Belgium who had fired its famous weather forecaster, for posting comments critical of immigration on Facebook. Modrikamen sued RTL Belgium for libel before the commercial court of Brussels and won a symbolic one euro of damages. He also represented the shareholders of the bank Fortis winning a record 1,3bln settlement on their behalf. Modrikamen garnered international press for his online videos endorsing Trump, and in one video he warned of extremist Islamist attacks only eleven days before the attacks on Zaventem airport and Maelbeek metro station in Brussels took place.

The PP has benefitted from its contacts to likeminded parties such as Debout La France and UKIP. In 2014 Mr Modrikamen helped found and became Vice-President of the ADDE party at European level which gathered likeminded parties from the EFDD group in the European Parliament. The ADDE and its foundation, the IDDE, were eligible to spend over two million euros of grant funding provided by the European Parliament in 2015 alone. The ADDE party and its affiliated foundation would later be asked by the European Parliament to repay hundreds of thousands of euros of ADDE and IDDE expenses as the Parliament Bureau deemed some of their expenditure to be non-eligible. Funding had supposedly been used to carry out constituency polling in the UK for regional and the 2015 parliament elections, however, in September 2018 the UK Electoral Commission released its report into the activities of ADDE and IDDE concluding that "the polling work was not a donation to UKIP under UK political finance rules".

In the 2014 Belgian federal elections the PP elected its first MP to the Federal Chamber of Representatives, Aldo Carcaci, a former Socialist party member with trade union links from the city of Liege in Wallonia. The PP is polling around 7% in Wallonia, which would give them a seat in the European Parliament 2019.

**The New Flemish Alliance** (Dutch: Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie, NVA)

*Mainstream Flemish nationalist people's party, EU-reformers, Populist*

The NVA with its four MEPs is the largest current Belgian delegation in the European Parliament and the party is the dominant political force in Flanders where it runs the regional government. In the 2010 Belgian Federal elections the NVA under the leadership of Bart De Wever became the largest party in Belgium, a significant accomplishment for a party formed in 2001. The NVA was still denied participation in government at the federal level until the 2014 elections when the "Swedish coalition" was formed consisting of the three Flemish centre right parties CD&V, OpenVLD, election winners NVA and the francophone MR.

The NVA has traditionally emphasized the Flemish issue within Belgium and as such has traditionally been staunchly pro-EU. As such it is a member of the European Free Alliance party at European level, a collection of regionalist parties that see a "Europe of Regions" (a strong EU emphasizing its regions), as a sort of goal.

The NVA was, however, convinced to join the European Conservatives & Reformists (ECR) group in the European Parliament when it was established by then Prime Minister David Cameron who at the time was seeking to reform the EU and had pulled the Tory party out of the European People's Party (EPP). The NVA was split on joining the ECR, but the younger members supported a more EU-critical position which prevailed. In the European Parliament deal-making the NVA has benefitted from its ECR membership, for example the ECR group recently promoted NVA MEP Helga Stevens as their candidate for president of the EP and the close link to the Tories helped legitimize the NVA which was perceived at the time as a populist movement, not necessarily as a governing party.

The NVA in government in Belgium has emphasized a hard line on immigration and security, garnering critique from local leftists and their media sympathizers. At European level the party has been critical of the ECB's "rescue" actions, with MEP Sander Loones being the most outspoken of their MEPs on this issue. Polling suggests NVA is likely to retain its MEP's in 2019.

### **Vivant-Ostbelgien**

Vivant is a populist party founded by a Belgian millionaire in 1997 that continues to exist only in the German-speaking community of Belgium where it is represented by two businessmen and part-time politicians that continue to criticise everything from local administration waste and expenditure to monetary policy and water quality. They can be described as social-liberal, fiscally conservative and radically democratic. The German community elects one MEP, traditionally from the dominant Christian Social Party, but if another party would win this seat it could be Vivant riding an anti-establishment wave.

## Bulgaria

The IMRO, NFSB and Attack parties have formed an electoral alliance since 2016, that currently supports the Centre-right GERB party (of former communist party bodyguard Boyko Borisov) in government. The *United Patriots* alliance is polling around 14% and has the benefit of ministerial posts, and as such the re-election of at least one, possibly two or three MEPs from the United Patriots electoral alliance is possible in 2019. However, recently all three party leaders from IMRO, NFSB and Attack have indicated they will stand on their own in the European Parliament elections 2019.

**IMRO – the Bulgarian National Movement** (Bulgarian: ВМРО – Българско Национално Движение, VMRO – Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie)

*Nationalism, pro-Irredentism (Greater Bulgaria includes Macedonia), EU-reformers, Anti-Roma*

The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization operated as a revolutionary national liberation movement in the Ottoman territories in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It sought to establish the independence of Macedonia and Adrianople. After communism fell a plethora of political organisations in the Balkans tried to legitimize themselves by attaching the IMRO(VMRO) brand to their cause. In 1989 the organization was established in Bulgaria. Krasimir Karakachanov, the current Defence Minister (and Deputy PM) of Bulgaria and leader of IMRO, was (like many other political leaders of today in Bulgaria) a collaborator of the security services under the communist regime. In the 2016 presidential elections Karakachanov came third with 15% of the vote. IMRO, like other parties in the region on the right, focuses a lot of its efforts on “the gypsy question,” in fact it is the most updated section of IMRO’s party website. Current MEP Angel Djambazki from IMRO is a member of the ECR group. According to a Council of Europe Commission against Racism and Intolerance report IMRO “is notorious for systematically propagating hatred against neighbouring peoples in the Balkans as well as anti-Gypsy propaganda.”

**The NFSB – National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria** (Bulgarian: Национален фронт за спасение на България)

*Nationalism, EU-reformers, Anti-Roma, Anti-Turkish*

In the 2013 elections, prior to concluding the electoral alliance, NFSB only secured 3,7% of the vote which left them without representation in parliament. NFSB’s leader (also a Deputy Prime Minister) Valeri Simeonov has called the country's Roma minority 'ferocious apes' whose women 'have the instincts of street dogs'. When photos surfaced during the 2017 elections of NFSB member (and deputy minister) Pavel Tenev doing Nazi salutes at a Paris museum in 2008,

Simeonov defended him and called the allegations silly recalling his own visit to Buchenwald in the 70's, stating "who knows what funny pictures were taken then." In 2017 Simeonov (together with Karakachanov from IMRO), while holding ministerial posts, joined protesters who tried to barricade the Bulgarian-Turkish border to stop ethnic Turks from voting in the Bulgarian election.

**Attack** (Bulgarian: Атака)

*Ethno-nationalism, Anti-roma, Anti-immigration, Orthodox Christian, Anti-globalisation, Anti-NATO*

Possibly the most radical of the right-wing parties in Bulgaria, Ataka are known for their uniformed street demonstrations and for labelling almost all recognizable national politicians traitors. The party A Council of Europe report described its party leader Volen Siderov as "well-known for his outspoken racist views." The party combines left-wing economics with anti-Masonic conspiracy theories and outright praise for both right and left wing authoritarian leaders from Putin to Chavez. Like IMRO it seeks to annul the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine, in which much of Bulgaria was lost following World War one.

**Reload Bulgaria** (Bulgarian: Презареди България, Prezaredi Balgariya)

*One-man party, Populism, Opportunist*

In the 2014 national elections Reload Bulgaria, then known as Bulgaria without censorship, succeeded in electing 15 MP's, the party and parliamentary group, however, dissolved due to defections and infighting and they did not contest the 2017 elections. The party's MEP (elected on the 2014 United Patriots alliance list) and leader, TV-celebrity Nikolay Barekov, has been accused of being the "puppet" of Bulgarian media/print oligarch Delyan Peevski. Barekov is a member of the ECR group in the European Parliament. Barekov has a long list of scandals associated with him.

**Volya** (Bulgarian: Воля)

*Populist, Anti-immigration, Pro-Russia, Anti-Establishment*

Volya was founded by pharmaceutical tycoon Veselin Mareshki in 2016. Mareshki's name appears on over 350 pharmacies around Bulgaria. Volya promises to "sweep away the garbage" of the corrupt political establishment in Bulgaria and stunned local observers when Mareshki, without much of a campaign, came fourth in the 2016 presidential elections with 11% of the vote. In a country where corruption is the rule, rather than the exception, Mareshki has been accused of shady business practices, including strong-arming his competition into ordering supplies from his drug distribution company. He also was accused of hitting a member of a city council and

constructing of one of his villas on public land without a permit. Mareshki claims that all such charges are attempts by the establishment to silence him. The presidential election result of Mareshki was not foreseen by pollsters in Bulgaria, therefore he again could outperform polls (Volya is currently polling 3%) in the 2019 European Parliament elections and win a seat.

## Croatia

Croatian right-wing parties struggle to gain parliamentary representation due to the, by Western European standards, very patriotic, soft-irredentist and socially conservative stance of the mainstream right-wing HDZ party.

**Croatian Party of Rights Dr. Ante Starčević** (Croatian: Hrvatska stranka prava dr. Ante Starčević, HSP AS)

*Nationalist, Irredentist, EU-reformer (Tomašić), Socially conservative*

The party which in its name pays tribute to the "Father of the Homeland", Ante Starčević is not represented in the Croatian parliament, but managed to secure a seat through an electoral alliance with HDZ, who was the main opposition party at the time of the 2014 European Parliament elections. HSP AS candidate Ruža Tomašić won the most votes in the election and joined the ECR group and the ACRE party at European level. Tomašić is unlikely to run again in 2019, and without her HDZ has no reason to include HSP AS on their list. Therefore the party is unlikely to win any seats in 2019, either in national or European Parliament elections. If Tomašić would chose to stand again, her high profile and popularity would most likely win her a seat again, whether she runs independent, for HSP AS or on a HDZ list in some fashion.

**Independents for Croatia** (Croatian: Neovisni za Hrvatsku, NzH)

*Independent-politicians*

Founded in 2017 to contest the local elections by independent Zagreb candidate Bruna Esih, the Independents list was joined by former HDZ Minister Zlatko Hasanbegović who left the party in response to HDZ joining forces with liberal HNS in the Croatian Parliament. In 1996 Hasanbegović wrote two articles glorifying the Ustaša regime, twenty years later he would defend his writings stating that the crimes of Ustaša was "the biggest moral lapse of the Croatian people" and that his articles were depicted out of context. He also claimed a photo from the early 90's in which he posed in a cap with an Ustaša symbol was fake. The Independents have two seats in the national parliament and could win a seat in the European Parliament if they can unite around a high profile candidate.

**Croatian Pure Party of Rights** (Croatian: Hrvatska čista stranka prava or HČSP)

*Nationalist, Irredentist, EU & NATO withdrawal, Socially conservative*

In 2012 the party's official website featured celebratory comments on the 120th birthday of Ustaša, the Nazi-puppet state, leader Ante Pavelić. The party as such has a tainted reputation internationally and only secured 13000 votes in the last parliamentary elections, its political actions mainly seek to influence the governing HDZ party's policies.

**Generation of Renovation** (Croatian: Generacija Obnove, GO)

*Protectionist, Socially conservative, Alt-right, Identitarian*

Founded in 2017 by 28 year-old Frano Cirko, a former Pure Party of Rights member, who has been photographed performing Nazi salutes, GO has been described as the alt-right party of Croatia. GO focuses heavily on campaigns against youth emigration and has raised its profile online by posting statements and visual imagery intended to provoke (trolling). The party opposes EU-membership and portrays the party as the only real opposition to HDZ. Cirko and GO members have been spotted regularly waving flags with symbols of the Ustaša. GO is not registering in polls and is unlikely to win any seats in the European Parliament elections 2019.

## **Others**

Željka Markić was the leading and winning campaigner in the Constitutional referendum that defined marriage as between a man and woman in 2013, two thirds of voters supported the campaign fronted by Markić, who received heavy backing from the Croatian Catholic church. In recent years she campaigned actively against the Istanbul Convention, organising protests in Zagreb supported by the church. If Markić heads a list focusing on social issues she could potentially win a seat in the European Parliament.

## Czechia

### Civic Democratic Party (Czech: Občanská demokratická strana, ODS)

#### *Mainstream Conservative, EU-sceptic, Pragmatist, Free Market*

Founded by former two-term President Vaclav Klaus the Civic Democratic Party is a liberal-conservative and soft Eurosceptic party that has been in government or acted as the main opposition party in Czechia since the 1992 elections. The party has somewhat recovered from a corruption scandal (that also involved other parties, bureaucrats, oligarchs etc.) that led to the resignation of the party's leader and Prime Minister in 2013. The scandal hurt the ODS in the 2014 European Parliament elections and the party lost seven out of its nine MEP's, its vote share shrinking from over 30% to 7%. The ODS is a founding party of the ECR and AECP and claims to be modelled on the British Conservative party. Its MEP Jan Zahradil is currently President of the AECP party and designated Spitzenkandidat for the 2019 EP elections.

### Party of Free Citizens (Czech: Strana svobodných občanů, Svobodní)

#### *Classical-liberal, Libertarian, EU-critical, Freedom oriented*

The Party of Free Citizens is a classical-liberal, libertarian and conservative party supported by among others the former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus, whose former adviser Petr Mach founded the party in 2009. Mach was elected to the European Parliament in the 2014 elections on the most EU-critical platform of the Czech parties and joined the EFDD group. Mach's message was aimed at the ODS supporters of Klaus, who do not think the party's EU stance was tough enough. Aside from the low-turnout European Parliament elections the party has not had electoral success at the national level. Czech election participation stood at 18% in the 2014 European Parliament elections, meaning only 80 000 votes were needed to elect Mach, the same scenario could repeat in 2019, if not for Svobodni, then for another EU-critical list.

### Freedom and Direct Democracy (Czech: Svoboda a přímá demokracie - SPD)

#### *Populist, Anti-Immigration/Islam, EU-critical, Opportunist*

Between the 2014 and 2019 European Parliament elections a right-wing, populist, anti-establishment and anti-immigration party rose to prominence and entered parliament under the leadership of Tomio Okamura. In the 2017 parliamentary elections Okamura's re-formed SPD attracted approximately 10% of the vote in Czechia. The SPD and Okamura are members of the ENF group and the MENL party founded by Le Pen's Rassemblement national and Vlaams Belang.

Okamura's party the SPD (and its predecessor Dawn of Direct Democracy – later Dawn or Usvit, dissolved after internal conflict over financial irregularities in 2017) is known for colourful, and tough rhetoric, especially when it comes to the issue of immigration and Islam. With election slogans such as "No to Islam, no to terrorism" and "Jobs for us NOT immigrants" Okamura has claimed the political ground furthest to the right on the Czech political spectrum. The Czech (the same applies to many eastern European countries) political climate and Czech voter have allowed Okamura to use tougher political language than Western European anti-establishment politicians could conceive of. In 2015 he listed a series of actions on Facebook that he claimed were necessary to protect the Czech way of life from Islam. Among the suggestions were that Czechs stop eating kebabs and should "breed dogs and piglets as pets and walk them near their neighbourhoods and mosques". He asked "How will your wife be able to eat if she has to wear a scarf on her face? "concluding that "Each kebab we buy is funding for another Burka,". The Okamura-founded Usvit party used an election poster depicting a white sheep standing on the flag of the Czech Republic and kicking a black sheep off of it, imagery that has been used by the German NPD.

In the lead-up to the 2017 elections Okamura called for leaving the EU saying that "The European Union can't be reformed. It only dictates to us. We refuse the multicultural European super state. Let's leave the EU,".

## Denmark

The Danish People's Party (Danish: *Dansk Folkeparti*, DF)

*Social conservatism, Anti-Immigration, Anti-Islam, EU-sceptic*

The Danish People's Party has served as a model for their sister parties the Sweden Democrats and The Finns. In the Nordic countries only the Norwegian Progress party can claim to be a more successful populist party. The Danish People's Party was founded in 1995 by previous leader Pia Kjaersgaard and current leader Kristian Thulesen Dahl when they chose to leave the Danish Progress Party, which had enjoyed huge success in the early 70's but had stagnated since then. In the 1998 Danish parliamentary elections DF won 13 seats and 7% of the vote. In the 2001 elections, two months following the 9/11 attacks in the USA, DF won 12% and became the third largest party, following a campaign dominated by DF's main issue; immigration. DF would end up providing parliamentary support to Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's liberal government over the coming ten years, and the ALDE affiliated liberals, with parliamentary support from DF ended up enacting some of the strictest immigration laws in Europe. Support for DF remained stable throughout these years, with a notable increase during the Jyllands-Posten Mohammad cartoon controversy.

In the 2009 European Parliament election DF's rising young star Morten Messerschmidt completed his political rehabilitation by winning a landslide election with the highest number of votes ever amassed by a candidate in a Danish election, 285000. Tabloids had previously attacked a younger Messerschmidt for raising his hand in what was depicted as a Nazi-type salute while singing German songs, he defended himself at the time by saying he had only tried to provoke a left-winger, but would later apologize. Messerschmidt's massive vote tally won DF a second seat in the European Parliament 2009 where it joined the EFD group and the EFD-linked MELD party at European level, the latter would later end up seriously damaging Messerschmidt's political career and hurt DF's popularity. Before those events would unfold, DF won a huge victory. The party won the 2014 European Parliament elections with 26% of the vote and Messerschmidt's 465000 votes was again record breaking. The party won four seats and moved to the newly founded ECR group. Through its existence DF has not always taken a hard-line EU-critical position in Denmark, though it has opposed most big-ticket proposals such as the euro and Schengen, it provided parliamentary support to Venstre in the early 2000's on many EU related votes. Over the years DF has taken a pragmatic EU-critical position, leaving the principled arguments for withdrawal from the EU to be advocated mostly by parties on the far-left and pressure groups. Dansk Folkeparti's EU position can be described as closer to the British Tories than to UKIP.

Since the success in the 2014 elections, DF has been hurt by a scandal of its own making. Messerschmidt as chairman of the European party MELD, signed off on expenses that the European Parliament interpreted as funding for national and regional election campaigns. The “MELD/FELD affair” became a two year tabloid affair in Denmark, with continuous leaks from European Parliament bodies to Danish media undermining Messerschmidt who eventually capitulated, went on sick-leave and was removed from European Parliament leadership positions by the party. In the end DF had to reimburse the European Parliament 1,6 million Danish crowns for in-eligible expenditure Messerschmidt had approved as MELD President.

DF welcomed the Sweden Democrats and the Finns party to ECR. The party considers their Nordic sister-parties to be “their most important partners in the fight against EU-federalism and migration from Africa”, however, for many years DF refused to officially endorse or support SD, mainly due to the party’s international perception as having had roots in the Swedish Neo-Nazi movement. In Nazi occupied Denmark this was unacceptable. The best proof that SD has succeeded in cleaning up the party over the last 15 years is the acceptance by their neighbours from Dansk Folkeparti.

Despite the setbacks that have plagued DF during the 2014-19 European Parliament term, the party will most likely return multiple MEP’s in 2019.

**The New Right** (Danish: Nye Borgerlige)

*Conservative, Anti-Immigration, Anti-Islam, EU-withdrawal*

The New Right was founded in 2015 by two members of the Conservative People’s Party (a not so conservative party). The New Right considers DF’s immigration policy as too soft, and the party seeks Danish withdrawal from the UN Refugee Convention. Unlike DF who are wobbling on the EU-exit issue (following Brexit the official DF position is to wait and see what type of deal the Brits get), the New Right wants to leave the “monstrosity of rules and laws” that is the European Union which threatens “Denmark’s prosperity, progress and democracy.” The party is economically libertarian and wants a smaller public sector. Since its inception the party has grown, though it did not succeed in local elections, and is now polling around 5%.

In order to win a Danish seat in the European Parliament The New Right would have to increase their support to around 6.5% which is possible, but not likely based on current polling.

## Estonia

The Conservative People's Party (Estonian: Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond, EKRE)

*Patriotic, Conservative, EU-critical, Direct Democracy, Anti-Immigration/multiculturalism*

EKRE was founded in March 2012 when the agrarian centrist party People's Union of Estonia and the nationalist pressure group Estonian Patriotic Movement (set up in 2006 to promote the removal of a Soviet WW2 monument from the heart of the Estonian capital) merged. The party has seven seats in the Estonian Parliament and should elect at least one MEP to the European Parliament in 2019. Party leader Mart Helme is a former Estonian Ambassador to Russia. The party labelled Angela Merkel the "midwife of multiculturalism" when she visited Tallin in 2016 with supporters dressing up in typically middle-eastern garb and slogans such as "Merkel Akbar", "Merkel do not support terrorism" and "You will not replace us" visible. The party opposes the EU mandated refugee quotas, and "sees no place for Estonia in a United States of Europe". EKRE's hard-line anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric in combination with its pro-Estonian family, culture and language political programme and communications has been grounds for some to label the party ethno-nationalist, though this labelling is debateable.

Internationally EKRE is perceived as a hard-line conservative party, its support for the Eesti Leegion (German: Estnische Legion) volunteers and its participation in annual Independence day torchlight marches in dark early February have given the party a bad image abroad. The party mobilised ~50000 voters in the parliamentary elections which, if repeated, in the lower turnout European Parliament elections would give them one seat. Recent polling shows EKRE support has grown from 10% in 2017 to above 20% in mid-2018 which would almost be enough to gain two of Estonia's six seats in the European Parliament. As EKRE is expected to make gains in the March 2019 Estonian parliament elections, it is unclear who would top the list for the European Parliament, if EKRE join a government coalition, it is likely that party leader Mart Helme stays at home and Henn Põlluaas or one of the other EKRE MP's go to the EP.

**The Estonian Free Party** (Estonian: Eesti Vabaerakond, EVA)

*Right-wing liberal, Populist, Anti-Immigration, Russia-realist*

Like EKRE the Estonian Free Party entered parliament for the first time in 2015, winning eight seats on a platform emphasizing tax reform to support small businesses and low-income taxpayers and a reduction of state funding of political parties. The party also opposed the EU migrant quotas though it considered some Estonian participation in dealing with the refugee crisis necessary to signal "responsible behaviour as an EU member," and to discourage EU-scepticism. The Free Party also party mobilised ~50000 voters in the parliamentary elections 2015 which, if repeated, in the lower turnout European Parliament elections would give them one seat, however, recent polling indicates only 3-5% support for EVA which would not be enough for a seat in the European Parliament.

## Finland

**The Finns** (Finnish: Perussuomalaiset, PS)

*Populist, EU-critical, Russia-realist, Anti-Immigration/Islam*

The Finns party was formed out of the remnants of the populist-conservative, anti-Helsinki-ruling-class, Finnish Rural Party, by its last Secretary-General, current Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini. Since its inception in 1995 the party spent almost twenty years in opposition until Soini agreed to join a centre-right coalition government in 2015. The party had more than doubled its support in the late 2000's during the height of the euro-crisis, drawing support from male socially-conservative Social-Democrats and Centre party voters. During the peak years of the first euro-crisis the Finns party's central focus was opposition to the bail-out programmes. The Portuguese bail-out package was approved in the Finnish parliament the same month the 2011 elections were held. The EU-critical 2011 election programme led to massive gains, the party went from five to 39 seats in parliament and became the largest opposition party. It successfully continued to conduct opposition politics during the 2011-15 parliamentary term, benefitting from the oratory skills of Soini and the weak "six-pack" pro-bailout government of PM Katainen that included former communists from the left party as well as right of centre parties. The Finns party has attracted colourful candidates, with an everyday background, which has given lots of material for tabloids to focus on. Though most of the scandals have been contained and explained as flaws of personal character, some of the party's MP's have been criticized for recurring outlandish comments and behaviour.

When the Finns party formed a government with the Centre and National Coalition parties following the 2015 elections, only one MP out of its parliamentary faction of 38 opposed the move. Participation in government, and betrayal of central election promises such as no further bail-outs for Greece would eventually split the party and alienate Soini. His chosen successor, lost a leadership contest to the party's second prominent national figure, long-time prominent immigration and Islam-critic Jussi Halla-Aho, in 2017. Since then Halla-Aho has successfully consolidated control of the party and though the split and government participation under Soini's leadership hurt support for the Finns, they remain stable around 7-10% in polls, which would give the party one seat in the European Parliament in 2019.

Lacking politicians with national name recognition (aside from the ones known for regular tabloid scandals) the Finns party is likely to nominate former Presidential candidate and youthful MP Laura Huhtasaari as its lead candidate for the European Parliament elections in 2019. The Finns MEP's are members of the ECR group, but the party has withdrawn its membership from the ACRE party at European level, citing the membership of the Turkish AKP party as the main reason. While the Finns party is not anti-EU, it takes a pragmatic EU-critical approach. The

party's grassroots are EU-critical but like the Finns leadership does not consider EU-withdrawal realistic. Halla-Aho has stated that he sees the emergence of EU-critics in the rest of Europe as a possibility to further Finnish interests.

**Blue reform** (Finnish: Sininen Tulevaisuus, SIN)

*Opportunist, Pragmatist, EU-reformers*

Blue reform is the name chosen by the 19 MP's that left the Finns party in protest against the election of Jussi Halla-Aho as chairman of the party in 2017. The Blue reform MP's continue to provide parliamentary support for the government coalition and retain control of five ministries, including the Foreign Ministry post held by Soini as well as the Justice, Defence, and EU affairs ministries.

The party continues to be a member of the ACRE party at European but have little chance of electing MEP's in 2019 as the EU-critical field will be crowded and the party has support of less than 2% of voters in polls. The party also lacks access to state party grants and it is highly unlikely their parliamentary faction budget can be used to campaign in European Parliament elections. It does, however, enjoy some new-found establishment media support, most likely because of the strong dislike for Halla-Aho among the left-liberal media establishment.

**7-star movement** (Finnish: Seitsemän tähden like)

*One-man party, Euro-critical*

Former MEP, long-term Minister and Honorary Chair (and seemingly eternal thorn in the side) of the establishment Centre party, Paavo Väyrynen announced in 2018 when he returned to the Finnish Parliament that he intends to stand in the European Parliament elections under the banner of a 7-star movement, inspired by the Italian Five-star movement. Although Väyrynen is sort of a Nestor of Finnish politics, and gathered an impressive 6,2% as an independent candidate in the 2018 Presidential elections (and 17,5% as the Centre party candidate in the 2012 Presidential elections) it is highly questionable whether this movement will be organized enough to pull off a similar result in the lower-turnout European Parliament elections 2019. Väyrynen is critical of the concept of ever-closer union and famously filibustered Finnish membership proceedings in the 90's. He is the most well-known politician proposing a Finnish euro-exit.

## France

The National Rally (French: Rassemblement National, RN, formerly Front National),

*Populist, Protectionist, Statist, Euro and EU reformers, Anti-system, Anti-elite*

The party of Marine Le Pen won the 2014 European Parliament elections with 24.86% of the vote. It was the first time the party had won a national election, an impressive result for a party that since 1973 had tried to unite far-right groups by being provocative. Though Marine Le Pen lost in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections, she proved that she had successfully broadened the party's base, succeeded in her process of "de-diabolisation" and established a new image of a cleaner party that could again gather allies to the right of Les Républicains and win votes from across the political spectrum.

Front National was created in 1973 as the entity that would field parliamentary candidates on behalf of the Ordre Nouveau movement, which had grown out of the street fights between far-left and far-right students in Paris in the late 60's and early 70's, as well as other fringe right and republican movements. During these years FN counted members of the Poujadist movement among their ranks. The Poujadists were conservative populists supported by shop-owners and artisans. After several other personalities on the fringe right had been considered, Jean-Marie Le Pen was selected as leader. Le Pen had been elected to parliament as part of the Poujadist wave in 1956 but chose instead to go to Algeria to take part in the Algerian war. When he returned to parliament in 1959 he took aim at De Gaulle's stance towards Algerian independence.

FN was irrelevant as a political force from 1973 to 1980, scoring between 0,2% and 0,8% in the elections it participated in. In 1983 President Mitterrand instructed heads of media companies to give equitable coverage to the FN which led to the first electoral success in the 1984 European Parliament elections when FN won 11% and ten seats. Some observers believe Mitterrand consciously "broke the silence" and allowed FN into the political arena in order to split the parliamentary right. In 1986 Mitterrand chose to organize parliamentary elections under the proportional system of seat allocation, this move was intended to soften the expected loss of the socialists, but ended up benefitting Le Pen who had allied regionally with other parties on the right and ended up winning 9,6% and 35 seats, FN's best result to date. In the following elections President Chirac re-instituted the majoritarian election system, and the 9% vote only gave FN one seat in Parliament. Aside from 1986, the electoral system has effectively denied Rassemblement National representation in relation to its electoral strength, in the last parliamentary elections 13% of the vote only gave RN 6 deputies (plus two affiliated).

When Marine Le Pen took over from her father as leader in 2011, she started a process of cleaning the image of the party which eventually led to the name changing (against the will of her father).

Despite her attempts, the baggage, controversies and connotations stemming from Jean-Marie's 30 plus years in charge of the FN, are not easily shaken off.

Since 1984 the European Parliament has been one of the main sources of funding for Le Pen's political activities, something that has caused his daughter some problems as the European Parliament is currently conducting multiple investigations into RN staffing arrangements and other alleged abuses of parliament funding. Jean-Marie Le Pen, still an MEP, has also been ordered by the European Parliament (following a legal challenge - Case T-140/16 Le Pen v Parliament) to re-pay hundreds of thousands of euros due to miss-use. Both father and daughter Le Pen claim the charges of miss-use are politically motivated.

Following the success in the 2014 elections, Marine Le Pen finally succeeded in forming a group in the European Parliament in 2015. The group formation enables the FN to spend millions of euros of taxpayers' money on its political activities. FN is likely to be second in the 2019 European Parliament election, currently polling 18%.

**France Arise** (French: Debout la France, DLF)

*Gaullist, Souverainiste, EU and euro critical, Social conservative*

Debout la France could in the past have been described as a one-man-party, centred around former UMP MP, and Gaullist Mayor of Essonne, Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, this is, however, no longer the case. In the 2014 European Parliament elections DLF almost won seats, securing 3,8% of the vote nationally. Staunch EU-sceptic and anti-EU-Constitution/Lisbon Treaty campaigner Dupont-Aignan has ran for president multiple times. In 2016 he received 4,7% of the vote in the first round and was selected before the second round by Marine Le Pen as her candidate for Prime Minister. The accepting of Le Pen's nomination was a break with DLF and Dupont-Aignan's traditional position, to not openly cooperate with Front National.

Both during the 2009->14 and 2014->2019 European Parliament terms, DLF has poached MEP's elected on the Front National list to join their party (and the EFD/DD) group. The party used to have close ties to UKIP but DLF have also been approached by the ECR group, who would like to see them join the group if the party elects MEPs in 2019. In 2018 RN MEP Bernard Monot left Le Pen's party and European Parliament group to join Debout la France and the EFDD. This signals that the opening during the 2016 Presidential elections was temporary, DLF aims to win its own seats in the European and National Parliament and current polling puts the party at 7% nationally, which is well over the needed vote share.

**The Patriots** (French: Les Patriotes: LP)

*One-man-party, EU and euro critical*

Founded by Florian Philippot one of Marine Le Pen's most influential advisers that joined the FN in 2011 and helped her push through the renewal and clean-up of the party leading to the 2014 election victory, that also brought Philippot to Brussels. He was central in the plot to oust Jean-Marie Le Pen from the FN in 2015. His tenure within the FN came to an end when the second round strategy of Marine Le Pen failed, and the parliamentary election success that was expected didn't follow either. Publicly Philippot founded Les Patriots to further the message of Marine Le Pen, but it was clear that his detractors within FN were many at the time. Less than 10% of FN local councillors joined Les Patriotes with Philippot when he left FN.

Les Patriots is non-existent in polls and it is highly unlikely Philippot will succeed in the 2019 European Parliament elections unless he manages to negotiate an electoral alliance with Le Pen's re-branded RN or Les Républicains (the mainstream centre-right party that has taken a turn to the right following its election of a new conservative leader). DLF already turned down Philippot's offers for an electoral alliance in 2019.

**Popular Republican Union** (French: Union Populaire Républicaine)

*Unilateral EU/NATO- withdrawal, One-man party*

François Asselineau, a former civil servant and UMP member, founded the UPR on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. The party seeks to withdraw from the EU and NATO. Asselineau presented himself at the 2017 presidential elections as the "Frexit candidate." Asselineau does not have the smooth media savvy image of Philippot or Dupont-Aignan. In contrast he looks more Nixonian. His party has built a grassroots following across the country over the last 10 years but it is unlikely the UPR will gain more than 1-2% of the vote in 2019. The right of centre hard-EU-critical vote will most likely be split between those still believing Le Pen's evolving message on the EU and those who support Dupont-Aignans more consistent EU-critical stance.

## Greece & Cyprus

The Popular Orthodox Rally (Greek: Laikós Orthόdoxos Synagermός, LAOS)

### *Orthodox-christian, Nationalist, Anti-Immigration*

LAOS is a right wing, socially conservative party founded in 2000 by a former New Democracy MP, claiming to express views from the left to the right of the political spectrum. The party considers globalisation to be the defining political issue of the day, either one supports it or opposes it. LAOS elected an MEP with 4% of the Greek vote in the 2009 European Parliament elections. LAOS MEP joined the EFD group. The party's popularity suffered from its stances during the peak years of the first Greek debt-crisis. Initially the party voted for the first bail-out, supporting PASOK and later changing its stance voting against the austerity measures in 2011. After the fall of the PASOK government of Papandreou in 2011, LAOS participated in the government of national unity for a few months until it left in protest against so called austerity measures. Support for LAOS evaporated during the three months they were part of the unity government and never recovered. The party received only 2% of votes in the 2014 European Parliament elections and lost all seats in the next national election. With only elected representatives at regional level LAOS entered an alliance with a former Samaras official, Takis Baltakos, in 2016.

In June 2018 Baltakos unveiled a new party that he launched with an MP that left the Independent Greeks over the Macedonia name-dispute. The purpose of the new party is to “prevent the surrender of Macedonia's name to Slavs” and to “remove the leftist government from power.” No details or name have been unveiled but it is possible a new party to the right of New Democracy could win a seat, just like LAOS and ANEL did in the past.

The Independent Greeks (Greek: Anexartitoi Ellines, ANEL)

### *Conservative, Opportunistic, EU-critical*

A former MP from New Democracy, Panos Kammenos, founded ANEL in 2012 after he was expelled from ND for voting against Papademos coalition government in a parliamentary vote of confidence. The party initially was joined by nine ND defectors and one MP from PASOK. They gathered 10% in the first 2012 elections and 7,5% in the second. In 2014 they won 3,5% in the European Parliament elections and their MEP Notis Marias, an Economics professor from Crete, joined the ECR group. He later left ANEL. In 2015 the party slumped to 4,75% and joined the SYRIZA government. Kammenos became Defence Minister and the party's support continued to drop, in the second elections of 2015 the Independent Greeks only gathered 3,7% of votes. Panos Kammenos has stated that Germany owes Greece war reparations and as Defence Minister

during debt negotiations in 2015 threatened that "If Europe leaves us in the crisis, we will flood it with migrants, and even worse for Berlin if in that wave of millions of economic migrants there will be some jihadis of the Islamic State too." ANEL is currently hovering around one percent support in polls, and it is highly unlikely the party will return to the European Parliament in 2019.

**Golden Dawn** (Greek: Laikós Sýndesmos – Chrysí Avgí)

***Anti-EU, Anti-Immigration, Anti-globalisation, Vigilantism***

One of the most denounced parties represented in a national parliament in Europe, Golden Dawn is an anti-globalist, anti-EU, anti-immigrant and nationalist party that shocked the establishment in Europe when it won 7% in both the 2012 Greek elections. The party won two seats in the 2014 European Parliament elections. Their MEP's are not aligned with any group but joined the NPD-led ultranationalist Alliance for Peace and Freedom that was funded by the European Parliament for a brief period of time between 2015 and 2017.

Golden Dawn has a reputation for enforcing its own kind of street justice and the party allegedly has ties to and support among Greek military and law enforcement. The party has a type of paramilitary presence.

Following an investigation into the murder of rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013 by a supporter of the party, party leader Michaloliakos and several other Golden Dawn MPs and members were arrested and held in pre-trial detention on suspicion of forming a criminal organization. Later in 2013 two Golden Dawn members were gunned down outside their party office in northern Athens. Golden Dawn is polling around 10% and will most likely retain their seats in the European Parliament in 2019.



Golden Dawn members hold party flags with the meander symbol at a rally outside of party HQ, Athens, March 2015

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## Hungary

Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary (Hungarian: Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom)

*Nationalist, Socially conservative, former Radicals undergoing clean-up, Opportunist*

Jobbik has for over a decade had one of the worst international perceptions of any right-wing party in Europe. It has been described as both anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi, though Hungarian populist nationalists would be more accurate. Jobbik was launched in 2003 as a Christian, patriotic conservative party whose fundamental purpose was the protection of Hungarian values and interests. In order to achieve the above stated goals, JOBBIK went as far as establishing a paramilitary wing, something unique for a European political party. Magyar Gárda Mozgalom (the Hungarian Guard Movement) was founded by Jobbik members swearing an oath of loyalty to Hungary at the Buda castle in Budapest in 2007. A court ruling dissolved the guard in 2009.

For foreign observers, Jobbik's 2009 European Parliament election advertisement stands out as one of the most radical ever made. A narrator describes how some Hungarians cultivate their land, some start businesses, some work 10 hours a day, and this little one (read gypsy) stole everything – followed by the JOBBIK fist crushing the little one. The ad concludes by stating: Hungary for Hungarians.



Orban's iron-grip on power in Hungary and his vanquishing of the previous ruling social democratic party to insignificance has given JOBBIK an opportunity to become the main opposition party in Hungary. Jobbik's transformation (it now disavows its past radicalism) from a radical ultra-nationalist party with a paramilitary wing to the Jobbik of 2018, is remarkable. The leadership under Gabor Vona started working on repositioning the party towards the centre around 2015-16 hoping they would be able to push

Fidez below 50% of the vote. Fidez was so afraid of Jobbik winning the 2018 elections that approximately 4/5 of their attacks the year leading up to the elections were aimed at Jobbik. Around this time Orban's friend-turned-enemy Lajos Simicsk, an oligarch that got rich investing in Fidez related businesses since the 90's, decided to start supporting Jobbik.

Jobbik won 20% in the 2014 elections, and the 2018 result was seen as a failure, as the moderation strategy did not increase the vote share for Jobbik, they instead lost many voters from the far-right. The result led some former members to leave in protest and start their own parties and party leader Gabor Vona resigned (supposedly he conceded that as long as Orban is

alive - there are no term limits - Fidez will win). Jobbik's moderation policy might finally allow their MEP's to join a group in the European Parliament from 2019 onwards, so far they have been shunned by all but the ITS group which briefly existed in 2007. One of its MEP's, Bela Kovacs, has been accused of being a Russian spy.

## Italy

The League (Italian: Lega)

### *Populism, Anti-Immigration, Regionalism, EU and euro-criticism*

Founded in 1991 as a federation of regionalist parties (notably Lega Lombarda and Lega Veneta) in Northern and Central Italy, Lega Nord was re-branded for the 2018 elections as Lega, but the full name of the party remains Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania. The party's founder Umberto Bossi led the party from 1991 to 2012.

Lega's long-standing goal has been fiscal federalism and the transformation of Italy into a federal state. It has successfully exploited deeply held resentment against centralization of power in Rome. Roma ladrona, meaning Rome big thief is one of the famous Lega slogans. The independence of Padania has been downplayed by the party in recent years, but it was a recurring theme during the Bossi years. In 2014 Matteo Salvini funded a sister party in southern Italy under the name Us with Salvini (Noi con Salvini) aimed at shoring up support for the growing party in the south of Italy. Under Salvini the party toned down the party's traditional regionalist stance and focused on a nationalist message focused on combating globalization, including a staunch EU-critical message. The party first rose to prominence during the corruption scandals that hit the established Italian parties in the early 90's. In the 1992 Italian election Lega won 8,7% of the vote and became the fourth largest party in parliament and in 1994 following an electoral alliance between Bossi's Lega and Berlusconi's Forza Italia, the centre-right won a majority in the lower chamber and decimated the scandal tainted centrist Partito Popolare Italiano. Berlusconi became Prime Minister with the support of Bossi's Lega, but the coalition was short-lived. The coalition fell apart within months mainly due to Lega's objections to proposed pension reforms that would have hurt the party's key constituencies. After the break-up of the first coalition with Berlusconi, Lega supported a centre-left coalition in parliament which led to internal protests and walk-outs of sections of the party. This tumult was followed by an era when Bossi's Lega focused heavily on the Padanian independence issue. The party returned to government following the 2001 election when it again joined the Berlusconi-led coalition which ruled Italy for most of the 2000's until Berlusconi was forced to step down in 2011 (Bossi also demanded his resignation by this time). In 2012 the skeletons from Bossi's years in charge emerged, as the party's treasurer was charged with money-laundering, embezzlement and fraud. He was accused of diverging party funds to the family and the circle around Bossi. This led to the resignation of Bossi only days later.

Following a brief power struggle with former second in command, moderate Roberto Maroni, Matteo Salvini became leader in 2013. Salvini, took the party in a more EU and euro critical direction (Salvini branded the currency a crime against mankind). He initiated cooperation with

Marine Le Pen who had taken over as Front National leader and Geert Wilders of the PVV (previously Lega had cooperated with the EFD group and UKIP which distanced itself from Le Pen). The party contested the 2014 European Parliament elections under the “Basta Euro” slogan (meaning stop the Euro) and won 6% and five MEPs, a disappointing result. One contributing factor was that the centrist Lega wing supported the euro and did not back Salvini’s change of course. The leader of this wing would be expelled from the party following a power struggle in 2015 as Salvini consolidated control.

Lega has governed Italy together with the anti-establishment, Centre-left, populist Five Star Movement since the 2018 elections in which Lega became the biggest Centre-right party with 17% of the vote. The League won the elections outright in Veneto, Lombardy and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Since joining government in 2018 Salvini has continued to rail against the EU and the party is enjoying record support in polls.

Barring any political scandals or government crises in Italy, Lega should comfortably win or come second in the 2019 European Parliament elections. Salvini has stated that following the 2019 elections he will “unite parties from Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, France and Germany to create a majority in the European Parliament for another vision for Europe, a vision in which every EU Member State has the freedom to choose their own economic policies.”

**Die Freiheitlichen**, (Italian: I libertari, dF)

### *Regionalism, Separatism, Populism*

Die Freiheitlichen is the sister-party of FPÖ in South Tyrol, a German-speaking semi-autonomous region of northern Italy. The party is currently enjoying record support. In 2014 the party ran a joint list with Lega and it is possible that they could elect an MEP through such cooperation in 2019. Salvini himself endorsed South Tyrolean self-determination in order to cement the alliance with DF. Die Freiheitlichen has had its own share of corruption scandals among its regional councillors, which led to the purging of the entire leadership in 2014 and additional resignations in 2017.

**Brothers of Italy** (Italian: Fratelli d’Italia, FdI)

### *Nationalism, EU-criticism, Anti-Immigration*

Fratelli was founded as a splinter party from Berlusconi’s PdL in 2012. The party is led by Giorgia Meloni, a former youth member of the Italian Social Movement (MSI) and the National Alliance (AN), its successor. MSI and AN trace their roots to the pro-Mussolini faction in Italian politics following World War two and Fratelli has continued to use their logo, a flame in the colours of Italy. Meloni was Minister of Youth in the fourth Berlusconi cabinet and ran successfully in the Rome regional elections of 2016, winning 20% and coming third. In 2018 Meloni’s Fratelli was part

of the centre-right coalition, the party obtained 4,4% and tripled its number of seats in parliament. Meloni is likely to win a seat in the European Parliament in 2019, if she stands, and the party passes the four percent barrier.

## Ireland

Ireland has a staunch EU-critical history, having voted no to the constitutional changes the Nice and Lisbon treaty required, however, both times the Irish voted a second time and approved the treaties. EU-critical voices from the Republic of Ireland have traditionally emerged from left-wing parties such as the radical leftist and republican Sinn Fein and the Irish Green party (which ceased to be EU-critical in the late 2000's).

Centre-right pro-EU Fianna Fáil, who are members of ALDE, had one MEP defect to the ECR in 2014 following the European Parliament elections, in reaction the party stated that the principles of the ECR group were incompatible with the party and removed the whip of MEP Brian Crowley.

### Irexit Freedom Party

#### *EU-criticism, Anti-establishment, Populism, Immigration-critical*

The party was launched in September 2018 after an initiative taken by Herman Kelley, a European Parliament staffer working for the EFDD group. In conjunction with their first congress they organized a conference which included Dr. Ray Bassett, a former Irish Ambassador to Canada and Professor Ray Kinsella, a former Irish Central Bank economist. The party will advocate Irish EU exit, a policy that has around 10-15% support according to polls in the Republic of Ireland.

The Single Transferable Vote system with three electoral districts works against new parties, especially right-wing parties that cannot enjoy transfer votes from likeminded parties. Around 72000 votes would be required in the Dublin district to gain a seat. The complete lack of other right-wing or EU-critical parties makes it possible for the Irexit Freedom party to attract a following, however, the party will most likely function as a pressure group for the years to come.

### Human Dignity Alliance

#### *Pro-life, Anti-same-sex-marriage, One-man party*

Founded by Independent Senator Rónán Mullen in 2018, the party was most likely founded in order to help Senator Mullen's European level party, the European Christian Political Movement meet its registration and funding requirements.

In 2014 Mullen ran as an independent in the Midlands North West district and received 36000 votes at the first count (5,6%), he was eliminated at the third of eight counts. Mullen has failed to attract other members of parliament that share his views opposing same-sex marriage and abortion. The party has little chance of succeeding at the European Parliament elections 2019.

## Latvia

**National Alliance "All For Latvia!" – "For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK"** (Latvian: Nacionālā apvienība „Visu Latvijai!” – „Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK”, NA)

***Nationalist, Russia-realist, Anti-globalist, Anti-Immigration***

Founded as an electoral alliance in 2010 and existing as a unified party since 2011, the National Alliance has been part of government in the Reform-Unity coalition (2011-14) and Unity (mainstream centre-right)-ZZS coalition (2014->). In government the party, together with ZZS, opposed the EU's refugee distribution schemes and supported mass demonstrations against immigration. The party won the 2004 European Parliament elections, following Latvian EU accession. Since then Dr Roberts Zile has been an MEP. Zile has successfully utilized his status as ECR group and ACRE party member to conduct political activities at home.. With NA being part of the government and Zile a three term incumbent, it is highly likely the party will secure at least one seat in the 2019 European Parliament elections.

When the ECR group was created British Labour politicians attacked the Conservative party for its affiliation with TB/LLNK whose MP's (but no longer Government Ministers) attend the annual Remembrance Day of the Latvian Legionnaires – soldiers from the 15th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS and the 19th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS. This commemoration is unique in Europe and must be viewed in the unique historical perspective of Latvia, whose citizens fought on both sides in WW2, with over 150000 dying. The Day of the Latvian Legionnaires was an official remembrance day in Latvia from 1998 to 2000.

**Union of Greens and Farmers** (Latvian: Zaļo un Zemnieku savienība, ZZS)

***Green conservatism, Rural-focus, Russia-realist, Euro-critical***

The electoral union of the Greens and Farmers has been governing Latvia together with the mainstream pro-EU, centre-right Unity party and NA since 2014. The alliance's major financial backer is oligarch Aivars Lembergs, who has been implicated in corruption and bribery scandals. The Green party of Latvia is by far the most conservative party in the European Green Party and many MP's from the Latvian Greens opposed the introduction of the euro in Latvia.

ZZS was staunchly against euro introduction and the only MEP elected in 2014 from this list rose to prominence nationally by campaigning against the euro. ZZS MEP Grigule first joined the EFDD group but was forced by the European Parliament establishment groups to leave the EFDD group if she wanted to be elected Chair of the EP Delegation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Grigule will retire in 2019, and it is unclear how EU-critical the Union of Greens and Farmers MEP(s) elected in 2019 will be.

**Who owns the state?** (Latvian: Kam pieder valsts?, KPVLV)

*Populist, Anti-establishment, One-man party, Opportunist*

The one-man party KPVLV's rollercoaster ride in opinion polling, first skyrocketing after its foundation to almost 10%, then dwindling to 2% in 2017 and following the arrest by anti-corruption police of its founder and sole MP rising again to 12%, is remarkable and a great example of the constant fluctuation on the conservative right in the Baltic countries. Founded by an unaffiliated MP elected on the small regional parties list, the KPVLV lacks a clear platform aside from its anti-corruption and anti-establishment message, for which there is a great audience in Latvia. If KPVLV candidates can get elected in the October elections to the National parliament, and if the party manages to not dissolve before the European Parliament elections 2019 they have a realistic chance of electing a MEP. The KPVLV is not focusing on EU related issues and it is likely they would run a pro-EU campaign (aside from on the migration issue) and their MEP likely would be pro-EU.

**New Conservative Party** (Latvian: Jaunā konservatīvā partija, JKP)

*Anti-Corruption, Anti-establishment, Pro-NATO, Pro-EU*

Founded in 2013 by a former National Alliance MP and minister, Jānis Bordans, the party has focused on anti-corruption campaigning and has been joined by two former law-enforcement officials from the anti-corruption police unit. One of the officials created headlines by blowing the whistle on a bribery scandal. The party stood for the first time in the 2018 parliament elections, and won 16 seats with 13,5% of the vote.

**For Latvia from the Heart** (Latvian: No sirds Latvijai)

*Social conservative, Populist, soft-EU-sceptic, Anti-corruption, Economic interventionism*

Founded by the former auditor general of the State Auditing Office of Latvia Inguna Sudraba in 2014, For Latvia from the Heart has enjoyed varied success, entering parliament in 2014 with 6,8% of the vote. The party opposes what it labels the "federalisation of the EU" that is "drowning Latvian sovereignty." For Latvia from the Heart lost all seats in parliament in the October 2018 elections and is highly unlikely to elect any MEPS to the European Parliament in 2019.

The party was like many Latvian parties heavily focused on its leader, who as a novice politician made some mistakes (lunching with oligarchs, bad public appearances etc.) that has hurt the party in polls. The party attracted the usual crowd of opportunists seeking to make a career through a new political party.

## Lithuania

**Order and Justice** (Lithuanian: Partija tvarka ir teisingumas, PTT)

*Conservative, Populist, Soft-EU-sceptic, Anti-establishment*

The party of EFDD group members Valentinas Mazuronis and former President of Lithuania and current MEP Rolandas Paksas. Paksas also served as Prime Minister twice, first in 1999, then again 2000-2001).

Paksas was impeached by the Lithuanian parliament in 2004 and the Constitutional Court of Lithuania found him guilty of violating the constitution and his oath of office. The impeachment vote took place following Lithuania's NATO and EU accession in 2004, fourteen months after Paksas won the presidency. He vehemently denied the three impeachment charges. He was accused of improperly restoring citizenship to a Russia-linked businessman Yuri Borisov who had contributed \$400,000 to Mr. Paksas' presidential campaign, in exchange, Borisov received preferential access to the president's office according to parliamentary investigators. The country's State Security Department also reported that he had also leaked classified information to Mr. Borisov about investigations into his dealings. President Paksas also faced a third charge of interfering with a privatization deal.

Paksas was prohibited for life from standing for parliament in Lithuania. He represented his re-branded Order & Justice party in the 2009 European Parliament elections and won 11,9% and two seats. In 2011, the European Court of Human Rights found the lifetime prohibition disproportionate and thus in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. Despite the ruling Paksas was barred from standing in the 2012 parliamentary elections, and his party lost a few seats in parliament. In the 2014 European Parliament elections Order & Justice improved its result to 14% and retained its two MEP seats.

Paksas and his colleague have been members of both the EFD (2009-14) and the EFDD (2014->) group, and briefly affiliated with the now defunct ADDE party at European level. The party is moderately EU-sceptic, Paksas supported EU membership in the mid-2000's. Order & Justice is polling steadily around 13%, which would mean the party would retain its two MEP's in 2019.

**Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance, EAPL–CFA** (Lithuanian: Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija – Krikščioniškų šeimų sąjunga, LLRA–KŠS)

*Minority party, Social conservative, Christian*

Valdemar Tomaševski the party's MEP and leader is a member of the ECR group in the European Parliament. In the Lithuanian parliament the party forms a group together with Order & Justice.

## Luxembourg

**The Alternative Democratic Reform Party** (Lux: Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei)

*National-Conservative, Populist, Direct Democracy*

Initially a single-issue party focused on establishing equality of public and private sector pensions in Luxembourg, the party has enjoyed continuous success and has over time developed policies in other areas. It has focused on classical populist policies such as opposing public sector waste, and socially conservative issues such as campaigning against euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The ADR is soft-EU-sceptic and is a member of the ACRE party at European level. ADR MP's were the only representatives in Luxembourg to vote against the Lisbon treaty. Pro-EU Luxembourg voters have so far not elected any ADR MEP, but support in European Parliament elections and support in recent polls has been steady around 7-8%. Despite the challenge by Déi Konservativ the ADR increased its number of MP's from three to four in the 2018 Luxembourg elections. It is unlikely the ADR will manage to increase support to 11-12% in the European Parliament elections 2019 which would be needed for the party to secure the last mandate from Luxembourg.

### **Déi Konservativ**

Founded by an excluded ADR MP, Joe Thein, Déi Konservativ has stated its intention is to join the EFDD group or the groups successor if successful in the European Parliament elections 2019. The party is unlikely to succeed in the European Parliament elections, it has around 100 members and only fielded candidates in one district in recent local elections, securing 2% of the vote in this district. In the 2018 Luxembourg parliament elections the party only received 0,27% of the vote.

## Malta

Malta's ruling Labour party opposed EU-membership in the 2003 referendum under the leadership of then Prime Minister and currently pro-EU MEP Alfred Sant (PES).

As a Catholic, English-speaking, Island-society that has introduced the euro Malta faces unique challenges that makes it fertile ground for EU-critical forces. The main factor restricting these issues from carrying a party to prominence is the electoral system which heavily favours the two mainstream parties. In addition the small size of the Island and the traditional culture of Maltese society, where the concept of omertà is still very much alive, and the car-bombing of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia was far from the first, enables the two mainstream parties to very effectively control internal opposition. Most likely the six Maltese seats in the European Parliament will again be split between the Labour party and the Nationalist party, both of whom are staunchly pro-EU parties today. EU-critical voices on the Island mainly gather around the nephew of former Labour PM Dom Mintoff, Ivan Grech-Mintoff's Alleanza Bidla and some of identitarian leaning support the Maltese Patriots Movement, MPM. Both of these parties can be most accurately described as pressure-groups as they currently lack both professionalism and financial backing. Neither is likely to gain a seat in the European Parliament elections 2019.

**Alliance for Change** (Maltese: Alleanza Bidla, AB)

*Pro-Neutrality, Against-EU-membership, Socially conservative, Christian*

Within Alleanza Bidla the ideological heritage of neutral and sovereignist Dom Mintoff's Labour party lives on. Alleanza is by Western European standards very socially conservative, opposing same-sex marriage, abortion and euthanasia. Economically the party is left-wing, though unlike the Muscat lead Labour party of 2018 it considers the effects of the euro on the Maltese economy and society to be horrendous as the English speaking euro economy cannot stem the inflow of eastern European low wage labour.

**Imperium Europa**

*One-man party, White-European-Unity, White-Liberation, Anti-Democracy*

Led by local holocaust-denier, united-white-Europe campaigner and perpetual European Parliament election candidate Norman Lowell, Imperium Europa decries democracy as a travesty and proposes "An Imperium for Europids only - and none else!." Lowell is likely to run and fail again in the next EP elections. He gathered 6200 votes at the first count in the 2014 European Parliament elections, most of any non-Nationalist or Labour party candidate. It was, however, still far from the ~30000 votes needed to make it to the 28th count and win a seat in the European Parliament under the Single Transferable Vote system.

## Netherlands

Forum for Democracy (Dutch: Forum voor Democratie, FvD)

*Dutch Values, Direct Democracy, Populist, EU-sceptic*

Forum voor Democratie is a national-conservative, Eurosceptic political party in the Netherlands, founded as a think tank by Thierry Baudet who has been the party's leader since it was founded in 2016. The party first participated in the 2017 general election, winning two seats in the House of Representatives. The party has since increased its support and currently is polling around 11% nationally which if realised in European Parliament elections would give them three seats.

FvD is founded on EU-critical activism, together with the popular satirical news and entertainment website GeenStijl and the campaign group Burgercomité EU, it formed GeenPeil, which organised the campaign to collect the required signatures to hold the Dutch Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement referendum in 2016. The association agreement eventually was voted through the Dutch parliament, against the outcome of the first consultative referendum under a new law enabling such referenda to be called by signature collection. This dismissal of the public vote has further grown support for FvD. The party states on its website that "it is time to end the monetary union and open borders and after this we leave the EU." FvD considers it possible to organise cooperation and trade in Europe through EFTA or the EEA.

The Party for Freedom (Dutch: Partij voor de Vrijheid, PVV)

*Populist, Anti-Islam, Anti-Immigration, EU-sceptic, One-man party*

The PVV of Geert Wilders is one of the most prominent and established populist, anti-Islam and anti-EU parties in Europe. Wilders left the mainstream liberal VVD party in 2004 over its stance on Turkish EU accession and campaigned against the EU Constitution which the Dutch rejected with 62% in a referendum in 2005. In 2006 he founded the PVV, a unique party structure, it has one member, Wilders and the party does not organize public party conferences and does not have local departments, a youth wing, or a research institute. The PVV is ineligible for state funding and relies entirely on donations.

Wilders has mastered the art of being a modern day political polemicist and was convicted for inciting discrimination for comments he made during the 2014 election campaign that a court found were "demeaning and thereby insulting towards the Moroccan population." In a televised incident that led to his prosecution, Wilders asked supporters whether they wanted more or fewer Moroccans, triggering the chant: "Fewer! Fewer! Fewer!", to which a smiling Wilders responded: "We'll take care of that."

The PVV takes a hard-line stance on the EU. It wishes to re-introduce the Guilder and leave the EU. The number one point in its 2017-21 programme remains the de-Islamisation of the Netherlands, to achieve this the PVV proposes among other measures to close Islamic schools and ban the Koran.

The PVV joined the ENF group in the European Parliament following the 2014 elections. Previously its MEPs had been unaffiliated. The PVV has traditionally fared well in European Parliament elections, in 2009 it came second, in 2014 third. However current polls indicate that supporters have abandoned the party and it only polls around 9% which would be enough for two seats in the European Parliament.

**Christian Union - Reformed Political Party** (Dutch: ChristenUnie - Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij)

*Protestantism, Social-conservative, EU-sceptic, Traditional Dutch values, Rule of law*

CU and SGP have contested the European Parliament elections on joint lists dating back to 1984. The CU-SGP name dates back to the 2004 elections. Both parties are EU-sceptic and by Western European standards very socially conservative, on economic issues they take many leftist positions.

The SGP famously did not permit female members to hold positions within the party until a court decision in 2005 forced them to do so or the party would lose state funding. SGP was a member of EFD during the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, after which it joined CU in ECR. The CU and SGP are the driving forces behind the European level party the European Christian Political Movement.

The CU-SGP list enjoys very reliable voter support and can count on 6-7% support in the 2019 European Parliament elections, enough to retain at least one, possibly both seats.

## Poland

**Law and Justice** (Polish: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS)

*Social conservatism, Christian values, Economic interventionism, pro-EU-funds, Anti-EU-rule*

Law and Justice is the governing party in Poland, enjoying a majority of its own in the Sejm and in the Polish Senate. The party was founded by Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczyński in 2001 and won the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections. Lech Kaczyński served as president until his death in a plane crash in 2010. Andrzej again won the presidency for PiS in 2015 and the party won the parliamentary elections winning 37%. Following the 2015 parliamentary elections, PiS domestic agenda, especially reforms of the judiciary, drew the ire of the European Commission who eventually referred Poland to the European Court of Justice for "breach of EU law". The merits of the case are highly debateable, but one thing is clear, the opposition party, PO, definitely has better friends in Brussels and Berlin than PiS. PiS, together with the British Tories are the founding and core parties of the ECR group and the ACRE party at European level. PiS is likely to win the 2019 European Parliament elections as the European Commission feud only helps motivate PiS voters and their majority has allowed them to tailor the election rules to suit their strengths.

**United Poland** (Polish: Solidarna Polska, SP)

*Socially conservative, Economic interventionists*

Founded in 2012 as splinter party from PiS by then MEP and current Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro, the party is considered part of PiS and hosts its more catholic-nationalist wing. In 2012 the party's four MEPs left the ECR group and joined the EFD. They cited the ECR group's liberal position on gay marriage, the ECR's support for the EU's climate change policies and their position that EU spending on agriculture should be cut as reasons for the move.

**Kukiz'15**

*Anti-establishment, Populist*

Founded as an association, not a party, by punk rocker Pawel Kukiz who had shocked the Polish political landscape with his presidential campaign in 2015 that received a surprising 21% of the vote in the first round. In the 2015 parliamentary elections Kukiz'15 cooperated with and fielded candidates for the National Movement, a hard right and nationalist organisation that gathers voters from the fringe right. In 2018 Pawel Kukiz apologized for having brought the nationalists to the Sejm. The Kukiz'15 platform promises measures intended to end the dominance of certain

parties in parliament, electoral reform, separation of powers, safeguarding of civil liberties and introduction of referenda.

**The Congress of the New Right** (Polish: Kongres Nowej Prawicy, KNP)

*Libertarian, Socially conservative, Anti-EU*

The KNP elected Janusz Korwin-Mikke, perhaps the most flamboyant and provocative of the 2014 intake of MEP's, as well as three others to the European Parliament in 2014. It was the culmination of twenty years of electoral failure for Korwin. In his first international media interview with the BBC following his election, he bluntly stated his goal was that "i want these people [his fellow MEPs] to hate me." Before taking up his seat in the EP, Korwin had stated that the EU is a "communist project" run by "Maoists like Barroso" and that the Commission building would be better used as a brothel.

During his time in the EP Korwin became known for his flamboyant and outrageous rhetoric, he called the wave of refugees sweeping Europe "human garbage" and provoked feminists by stating that women "must earn less than men because they are weaker, smaller and less intelligent". He also compared the EU's employment policy to that of President JFK, stating that 'we have 20 million Europeans who are now negroes of Europe'. For these statements he was fined by the EP. The fine for his statement about women was overturned upon appeal to the ECJ (see Case T-770/16 - Korwin-Mikke v Parliament and Case T-352/17 Korwin-Mikke v Parliament). After Korwin left, KNP has not really been relevant as a political force.

**Liberty** (Polish: Wolność)

*Libertarian, Socially conservative, Anti-EU*

When KNP ousted Korwin, supposedly over his fathering of a child out of wedlock and having continued to make countless over the top provocative statements in the EP, such as "our enemies are not in Moscow but in the mosques of Marseille..." and "I am not Charlie I am for the death penalty" following the Charlie Hebdo shootings, he founded Wolność. Initially the party was named KORWiN. In the 2015 parliamentary elections the party almost made it to parliament, receiving 4,76% of the vote (5% barrier). Wolność is polling around 2% and could make it to the European Parliament in 2019 if participation is low and EU-critical sentiment remains prevalent.

Both Korwin and Wolność MEP Robert Iwaszkiewicz have been investigated by OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office, for fictitious employment of family members and friends as assistants. Korwin left the European Parliament in 2018.

## Portugal

Portuguese right-wing political parties have been unsuccessful mainly due to the relatively late return of power from the National Salvation Junta to democratic processes. The memory of this regime has created a political landscape dominated by left-of-centre political parties, with the lone exception being the pro-EU socially conservative CDS – People's Party. Secondly the anti-globalist, anti-American and anti-troika sentiment existing in Portugal, that has fuelled the rise of for example Golden Dawn in Greece, has effectively been absorbed by the radical leftist Portuguese Communist and Left Bloc parties who both have seats in parliament and are rooted in society, more visible and credible than others seeking to oppose the government.

**The Earth Party** (Portuguese: Partido da Terra, MPT)

*Green conservatism, pro-EU-integration, pro transparency & accountability*

In 2014 two MEP's were elected from Portugal on the list of the newly created Movimento o Partido da Terra. The most prominent was the former Chairman of the Portuguese Bar Association António Marinho e Pinto. His MEP colleague José Inácio Faria disliked Marinho e Pinto's "egoist" style from day one in the parliament and the two quickly ceased to cooperate. After a brief stint in the ALDE group Inácio Faria left for the EPP and relations between the two MEPs remain frosty. Inácio Faria has taken over as leader of the Earth party and stands a decent chance at re-election in 2019. Inácio Faria wants to work for more transparency and accountability within the EU when he spoke to this author in 2014 and could be an ally on some issues.

**The National Renovator Party** (Portuguese: Partido Nacional Renovador, PNR)

*Anti-Americanism/globalism, Anti-Immigration, Anti-troika*

Partido Nacional Renovador (PNR) has stood in elections since 2002 with their best result in a national election being 0,5% in 2015. Unlike similar parties elsewhere in Europe, the PNR is openly anti-American, decrying Europe's subjugation to the US and above all condemning the deployment of European forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. The PNR calls for Portugal to leave NATO and regain full military sovereignty. In 2013 the party tried to re-brand itself, rolling out a "national opposition" narrative, which presented globalization as the number one threat, personified in Portugal by the so called Troika together with its national agents (read between the lines: all the parliamentary parties.) On social issues and values issues and the PNR takes similar positions advocated more effectively by its more moderate competitor the CDS-PP. The party is unlikely to succeed in the 2019 European Parliament elections.

## Romania

**The Save Romania Union** (Romanian: Uniunea Salvați România, USR)

*Anti-corruption, Anti-establishment, Pragmatist, Populist*

USR was founded following the success of the Save Bucharest Union (USB) party founded and led by mathematician Dan Nicușor in the 2016 local elections. In the 2016 parliamentary elections Nicușor's USR came third with 8,8% support. Currently the USR is polling around 7% which would be enough for one seat in the European Parliament.

USR attracts both leftist and conservative supporters and has risen to prominence campaigning mainly on anti-corruption issues. Soon after the 2016 elections it became clear that the party's MP's are as divided as the supporters and MP's have had a hard time agreeing on major political issues, the lack of a focused platform and ideology threatens the party long term and has contributed to internal distrust among MP's and activists.

**The Greater Romania Party** (Romanian: Partidul România Mare, PRM)

*Nationalist, Irredentist, Anti-Hungarian, National Communist*

Founded by a Ceaușescu lackey, Vadim Tudor, the Greater Romania party aspired to continue the ideological heritage of Ceausescu's deeply rooted brand of national communism combined with the (previously forbidden) irredentist aspiration of creating a Greater Romania based on the borders of the Kingdom of Romania. The party also sought to ban the ethnic Hungarian minority party and praised Axis ally Ion Antonescu. Romania Mare sent three MEP's to the European Parliament in 2009 and lost these seats, scoring only 3% in the 2014 elections.

A trivial piece of European Parliament history was written by the Greater Romania party which had sent five MEP's to the EP in 2007 following Romanian EU accession. The party's MEP's first helped establish the Jean-Marie Le Pen backed Identity Tradition and Sovereignty group and later torpedoed the group after Italian MEP Alessandra Mussolini, a member of ITS, had offended Greater Romania MEP's. The party has since the death of Tudor ceased to be relevant in Romanian politics and stands little chance of a comeback in 2019.

M10

*Opportunist, Liberal-Conservative, Pro-US/NATO*

M10 is a one-woman party founded by former Democratic Liberal Party (Romanian: Partidul Democrat-Liberal, PDL) Justice Minister Monica Macovei who was elected to the European Parliament on the PDL list in 2014. She defected and joined the ECR group in 2015 which supported her launch of the M10 movement. Macovei has no chance of re-election in 2019 and her movement is not registering in any polling.

## Slovakia

Slovak politics is constantly fluctuating, with new parties and movements being launched ahead of almost all national elections. The political climate is as in many other post-Communist countries favourable to right-wing conservative parties.

The fact that only around 30000 votes are needed at European Parliament elections to win a Slovak seat, makes it hard to predict who will gain the Eurosceptic seats, it all depends on what alliances are formed, and who runs under what banner.

In 2014 the joint list of mainstream centre-right parties NOVA, the Conservative Democrats of Slovakia (now defunct) and OĽaNO secured one seat and its MEP joined the ECR group.

**The Christian Democratic Movement** (Slovak: Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie, KDH) is affiliated with the EPP at European level and elected two MEPs in 2014, Branislav Škripek, the more conservative joined the ECR group and acts as President of the European Christian Political Movement, a European level party.

**Freedom and Solidarity** (Slovak: Sloboda a Solidarita, SaS)

*Limited government, EU-sceptic, Euro-critical, classical-Liberal/Libertarian*

The party of Richard Sulik, MEP, who gained some international notoriety following his refusal to support, in the Slovak parliament, the authorisation of additional funds to the European Financial Stability Facility (the predecessor of the ESM) in 2011. Sulik and his party who were part of the governing coalition believed that allowing Greece to go bankrupt would be a better solution for the rest of the Eurozone member countries. As a result of this vote the Slovak government collapsed. SaS and MEP Sulik joined the ECR group following the 2014 European Parliament elections. Sulik who studied in Germany has regularly appeared on German television talk shows, where he famously has attacked the then President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz and in 2015 debating refugees forcefully ended a statement on the Maischberger show saying: "Ich will nicht in einem Europa leben, wo mehr Muslime geboren werden als Christen - und ich bin Atheist." SaS has around 15% support which would secure at least one seat in the European Parliament elections 2019.

**The Slovak National Party** (Slovak: Slovenská národná strana, SNS)

*Nationalist, Identitarian, anti-NATO/Hungary/Roma, pro-Irredentism/Greater Slovakia*

SNS has been represented in the Slovak parliament every term except following the 2002 and 2012 elections. SNS was part of Robert Fico's coalition government between 2006 and 2010,

which led to the suspension of Fico's party SMER-SD from the Party of European Socialists (PES) which labelled SNS a "political party which incites or attempts to stir up racial or ethnic prejudices and racial hatred." In 2009 SNS elected one MEP to the European Parliament who joined the EFD group, SNS is currently supporting the MENL party at European level, closely linked to the ENF group and Le Pen. The party has a tainted international reputation, under its previous leader SNS published a map on its internet forum where the territory of Hungary was divided between Slovakia and Austria, eliminating Hungary from the map. Most recently it secured 8% in the 2016 Slovak parliament elections bringing it back to government under Fico and his successor. SNS currently controls three ministries out of 15 and has around 10% support in polls. Utilising its prolific government position SNS is likely to elect at least one MEP in 2019.

**Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia** (Slovak: Kotleba – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko, LSNS)

*National-Socialist, Identitarian, pro-Christian, anti-NATO/EU/Hungary/Roma*

The most radical parliamentary party in Slovakia traces its ideological heritage back to Jozef Tiso, the Governor of the Nazi client state of Slovakia who was executed for war crimes. The party describes itself as "the only real opposition to the corrupt and criminal democratic system." It is known for organising uniformed marches of its supporters. Kotleba wants Slovakia to leave the European Union, European Monetary Union and NATO. Its platform includes anti-Roma rhetoric, a focus on immigration control, Christian morality, paternalism on economic issues, interest-free national loans, replacement of the euro currency with the Slovak koruna, law and order, rejection of the idea of same-sex civil unions, and criticism of the country's current leadership and foreign policy. Kotleba also proposes populist measures such as reducing the number of parliamentarians, widening freedom of speech, establishing a home guard, and to withdraw the Slovak military from missions abroad. The party is polling around 10% which would give it one seat in the European Parliament.

**We are family** (Slovak: Sme Rodina)

*One-man-party, Populist*

Sme Rodina is the one-man party of businessman Boris Kollar launched "to erase corruption from Slovak society and to successfully fight against political oligarchy." Sme Rodina focuses heavily on anti-immigrant, pro-family political messaging and has the funds and support to gain a seat in the European Parliament elections 2019. In 2016 a member of the Slovak intelligence services handed over documents to the media that supposedly show Kollar having had links to organised crime in the early 90's, Kollar dismissed the claims as a fabrication and a smear campaign.

**Slovak Conservative Party** (Slovak: Slovenská konzervatívna strana, SKS)

SKS was established by a former member of Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) in 2014 as NETWORK. The party achieved 5,6% and won 10 seats in the 2016 Slovak parliament elections. It joined government with Fico's SMER-SD after which all MP's have defected to other parties. SKS is likely to partake in a coalition with other centre-right parties at the 2019 European Parliament elections, as it stands little chance of winning a seat on its own.

## Slovenia

Slovenian National Party (Slovene: Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka, SNS)

*Nationalist, Protectionist, Anti-EU and NATO membership, Tito-sympathetic, Anti-Croatian*

The SNS is polling six percent at the moment which is almost enough to get a seat in the European Parliament if participation is extremely low in 2019. The SNS could elect one MEP if they can slightly increase support and take advantage of low turnout. The SNS leader has defined himself as a leftist and the party combines leftist economics with social conservatism and populist tax policies (higher minimum wage - no property tax). The party advocates improved relations with Serbia and takes anti-Croatian positions. In 2016 it signed a political cooperation agreement with the nationalist Serbian Radical Party which has ties to the ultranationalist Russian LDP party.

## Spain

Like Portugal, the historical experience and longevity of the Franco regime, which didn't collapse until 1975, has hindered the rise of right-wing parties, while the establishment Centre-right Partido Popular effectively has appealed to social conservative voters. EU-critical forces in Spain are almost exclusively far-left, such as the far-left-republican Catalanian CUP. In 2005 Spain voted for the European Constitution in a referendum, one of the few countries to do so. Ten years later, following the euro-crisis and the Spanish bank-bail out, support for the EU has fallen drastically. A 2015 poll indicated only 25% of Spaniards held a favourable view of the EU, while 61% held a negative. In addition secessionist political forces in Catalonia and the Basque Country tend to be pro-EU.

### VOX

#### *Nationalist, Conservative, Immigration-critical, Anti-secession*

VOX was founded in 2013 and joined in 2014 by a former PP MP Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca who had been a Vice-President of the European Parliament, MEP from 1999 to 2014 and former leader of the PP in Barcelona and Catalonia. When he left PP to form VOX he cited the PP government's policies towards the end of ETA and Catalan nationalism as his reasons. Vidal-Quadras Roca headed the VOX list for the 2014 European Parliament elections but failed to retain his seat and resigned as party president. The party received 1,5% of the vote in the 2014 European Parliament elections and continued to stand candidates in regional elections, failing to win seats. Santiago Abascal, a Basque former PP politician took over leadership ahead of the 2015 elections, however, the party only managed to secure 0,2% in the 2015 and 2016 elections.

The party opposes the current autonomy arrangements for regions within Spain and wants to ban pro-independence parties. It is socially conservative and nationalist. Party members were arrested in 2016 for raising the Spanish flag in Gibraltar. The party also filed several criminal complaints against Catalan pro-independence politicians.

**La Falange** is a fringe party in Spain with two regional councillors as their only elected representatives. The party claims to be the ideological heir of Falange Espanola, a fascist inspired organization active between 1933 and 1934. La Falange is non-existent in polls and received only 254 votes in the 2016 General elections.

## Sweden

**Sweden Democrats** (Svenska: Sverigedemokraterna, SD)

*Nationalist, Conservative, Immigration-critical, EU-critical, Traditional Swedish*

The Sweden Democrats are the de-facto opposition party in Sweden, comprising the third bloc in parliament. SD describes the other parliamentary parties as the seven-leaf-clover or "sjuklövern" for their consensus on Immigration, integration and multiculturalism. Following gains in the 2014 Swedish elections, SD announced it would vote against any budget proposition (where the real parliamentary power lies in Sweden) that funded further mass immigration. As neither the left or right wing were able to form a majority without support from SD all other parliamentary parties concluded the so called December-agreement under which any minority government would be allowed to have its budget pass parliamentary votes in order to deny SD any influence. The agreement was hugely unpopular among right-wing bloc voters and was later torn up by the opportunist Christian Democrats who feared losing representation in parliament in the 2018 elections. Nonetheless the December agreement solidified SD's status as the opposition party in Sweden.

It is unlikely that SD will be a governing party even though the party received 17.5% of the vote in the 2018 elections and became the 3rd largest party after the Social Democrats and Moderates. Some right-bloc MP's mainly from the Moderate and Christian Democrat party have publicly discussed a confidence-and-supply arrangement similar to the Danish model where the Danish People's Party provides parliamentary backing to the right-of-centre coalition but does not participate in government. This type of agreement without direct influence has been ruled out by the SD leadership and the MP's that suggested it have had to retract their statements.

SD was reluctantly admitted to the EFDD group in the European Parliament following the 2014 elections. The international perception of the party at the time, especially the party's roots in the Swedish neo-Nazi movement was seen as a deal-breaker. However, to find seven delegations UKIP and the Five Star movement accepted SD into the EFDD group, after their MEPs agreed to sign a statement distancing themselves from the party's historical roots. In 2018 SD announced it had moved to the ECR group. The move was just like for the Finns and the Danish People's Party a way to gain domestic legitimacy in an election year by allying with the British Tories and other government parties in Europe that cooperate within the ECR. Since Jimmie Åkesson and his supporters took control of the party in 2005 they have moderated and cleaned up the party organisation. This process has led to accusations of abuse of power, however, Åkesson's zero tolerance policy has succeeded in cleaning up the image of SD domestically while the party's number one issue, mass immigration, has risen to the top of voters concerns.

SD chose two "ordinary Swedes" as their lead candidates in the 2014 European Parliament elections, a trucker and a nurse. Their slogan was "less EU more Sweden" identical to the Danish People's Party slogan that year. SD gained two seats and will most likely increase the size of their European Parliament delegation in 2019. Cooperation with their Danish and Finnish sister-parties is seen as crucial since SD for the longest time was shunned by both Danes and Finns for having "brown roots." The Sweden Democrats programme calls for withdrawal from the EU following a referendum vote. Though Åkesson defended the EU-withdrawal position in the week leading up to the general election 2018 the party takes a rather pragmatic approach to the issue.

**Alternative for Sweden** (Svenska: Alternativ för Sverige, AfS)

*Nationalist, Populist, Radical SD-alternative, Identitarian, Anti-Immigration/Islam*

Alternativ för Sverige was launched in 2017 by former leaders of the Sweden Democrats youth wing that SD had severed ties with after they were considered too radical. The party has positioned itself to the right of SD, catering to voters that see SD's moderation and zero-tolerance policies as a betrayal of the party's previous tougher stance. AfS stood for parliament for the first time in 2018 on a manifesto focused on repatriation of immigrants, Swedish EU-withdrawal and general populist policies such as reduced foreign aid and tougher sentences for criminals. The party received 0,31% of the vote. AfS has been criticized by SD for attracting the same people as the Nordic Resistance Front (radical nationalists that have a fringe following - the Finnish branch is banned) and as the home the nut-jobs of Swedish politics.

The party leader Gustav Kasselstrand has through his time at the head of SD's youth wing established contacts to some right-wing parties in Europe such as the RN (Formerly Front National) and the AfS claims Front National and AfD as its inspiration. The number ten candidate on the AfS list in Stockholm for the 2018 parliamentary elections was caught on video campaigning by posting caricature Jewish noses on the election posters of PM candidate Kristersson from the Moderate party. Incidents such as this one explain why SD are happy to lose a percentage or two of support to AfS, as AfS is attracting people that are considered too radical by the SD leadership. The number of right-wing radical voters moving from SD to AfS is more than made up for by the inroads made towards the political centre by SD appearing cleaner in the process.

AfS has little chance of gaining seats in the 2019 European Parliament elections. It faces a giant hurdle in that ballots will not be distributed by the state (as it stands for the first time in EP elections). AfS slim chance stems from the tradition of Swedes to always send a new party to the European Parliament. In 2004 it was the EU-critical June List, in 2009 the Pirate Party, and in 2014 the Feminist Initiative.

**Citizen's Coalition** (Svenska: Medborgerlig Samling, MED)

*Socially conservative, Economic liberal, Immigration critical*

Medborgerlig Samling was founded in 2014. Since 2016 the party is led by Ilar Sadé, a former Centre party member and well-known op-ed writer in Sweden. Sadé left the Centre party after it pushed through a new socially-liberal manifesto that was adopted in 2013.

MED focuses more on individual liberty than SD or AfS. It is more economically liberal and wishes to see less state intervention in people's lives. MED's limited government stance is unique in Swedish politics as is its Green conservatism, considering conservation of Sweden's nature a link that binds Swede's throughout history.

Recently MED caused headlines after a black Police officer from Stockholm appeared on election posters in his uniform. MED has registered at 1-2% in national polls but only received 0,2% in the 2018 parliament elections.

## About the author

Richard Byfält, a Finnish national, has been the Sec. Gen. of an EU-critical European political party for five years, during which he was in touch with many of the parties examined in the report. As a public policy consultant specialised in EU affairs, he has assisted think tanks, researchers and political parties on EU-related issues. Previously, he worked at the European Commission and in the European Council for the Finnish Foreign Ministry.

