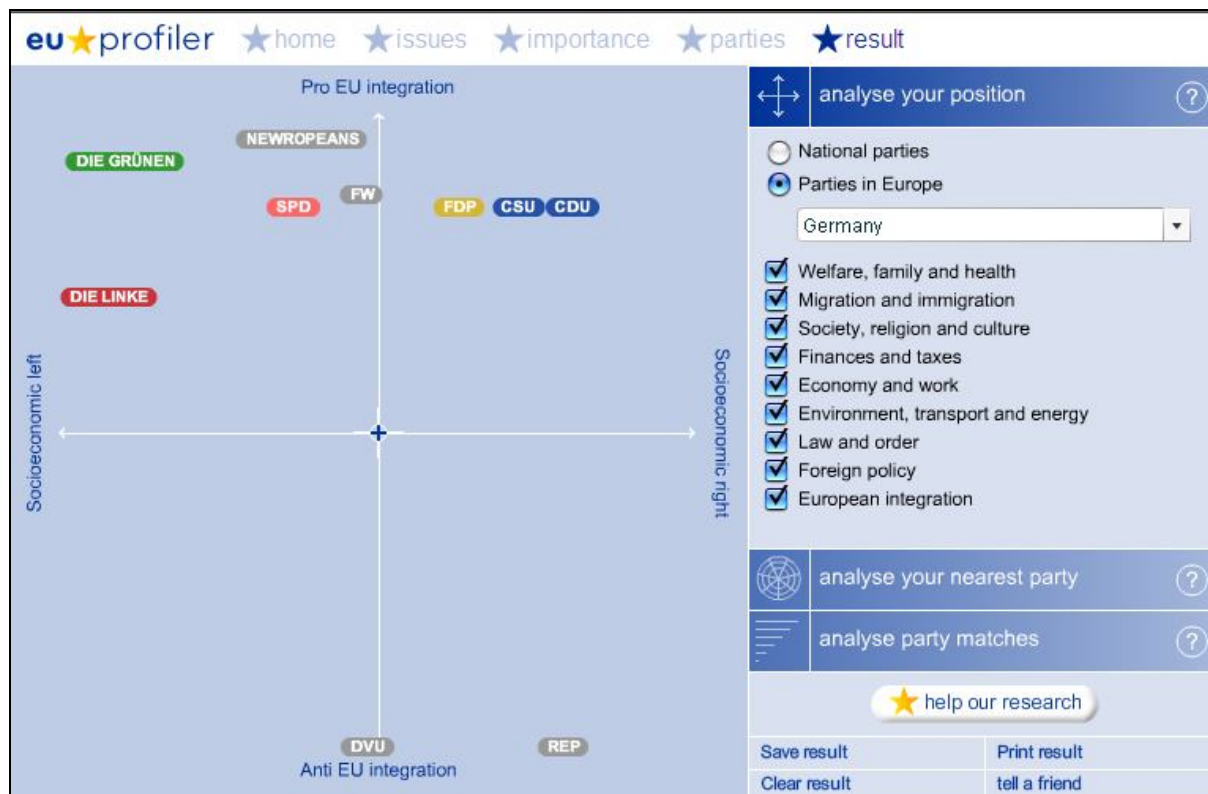


## THE GERMAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE<sup>1</sup>



The German political landscape of the EU Profiler contains ten parties of which six are also represented in the German parliament (Bundestag).

Concerning the support for the European integration, there is a gap in the German party system. While all democratic parties clearly support integration, the two right-wing extremist parties – the DVU (Deutsche Volkunion/ German People’s Union) and the Republikaner (Republicans) – strongly oppose the European Union. Despite the wide consensus among the democratic parties, one has to differentiate further. DIE LINKE (The Left) supports the idea of European integration but rejects the Lisbon treaty and the – from their point of view – neoliberal tendency of the European Union. This position is also reflected in the EU Profiler, where DIE LINKE is the most EU sceptic party of the democratic bloc. Albeit this differentiation, there is a wide elite consensus among the established parties in favour of European integration.

<sup>1</sup> This graphic and its description are based on the so-called ‘political landscape’ of the voting advice application EU Profiler. For positioning the parties, the EU Profiler academic team extensively researched the manifestos and other sources of the covered parties and positioned them on the statements of the EU Profiler. For more details on the EU Profiler and its methodology, please visit [www.euprofiler.eu](http://www.euprofiler.eu) or contact Dr. Fabian Breuer ([Fabian.Breuer@eui.eu](mailto:Fabian.Breuer@eui.eu)).

On the socioeconomic left-right axis we find a cluster of conservative and liberal parties on the right side of the spectrum, containing the CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union/ Christian Democratic Union), the CSU (Christlich-Soziale Union/ Christian Social Union) and the FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei/ Free Democratic Party). The individual positions of the parties on the left side of the political landscape are much more diverse. While DIE LINKE is located near the left margin of the spectrum, the SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands/ Social Democratic Party) takes a much more moderate, close to centrist position.

The **Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD)** struggled for its political track after the end of the red-green coalition in 2005 and eventually moved to the left. After the end of Gerhard Schröder's chancellorship, acrimonious disputes over the programmatic alignment and the best way to deal with the newly founded party DIE LINKE erupted. In the course over these struggles, which have been mitigated by now but are still not resolved, the party leader Kurt Beck resigned.

The position of **Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen (Alliance 90/ The Greens)** on the right-left axis is very interesting as well. While being part of the red-green coalition from 1998 to 2005, the Green party backed reforms of the labour market, which included reductions of social benefits to create incentives for employment. After the end of government participation, the Greens – just as the SPD – started programmatic changes, which are now reflected in their position on the socioeconomic axis.

The stronger accentuation of welfare by the SPD and Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen is to a large part a reaction to the success of the new party **DIE LINKE (The Left)**. This party is a merger of the PDS (Partei des demokratischen Sozialismus/ Party of Democratic Socialism) and the protest movement WASG (Wahlalternative Arbeit und soziale Gerechtigkeit/ Electoral Alternative Labour and Social Justice) and was founded in 2007. Its electoral success is mainly based on the protest against the devolution of the welfare state and against globalization. This party is a collecting pond for dissatisfied social democrats and unionists and is simultaneously integrating supporters of the former Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED, state party of the GDR) into the democratic political system. DIE LINKE represents a clear leftist position and combines it with a generally positive, albeit critical attitude towards the European Union. Therefore, DIE LINKE does not disband the elite consensus on the EU but makes it seem diminishing.

The affiliated parties **Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU)** and **Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU)** are connected by a clear programmatic proximity, even though one could have gained a different impression after the struggles between both parties during the last months. Both, CDU and CSU, reject the idea of Turkey joining the EU. Referenda about changes of the European treaty are supported by the CSU but rejected by the CDU. At the moment, possibly in the light of the upcoming European as well as national election, there is a heated debate in the CSU about the EU, including prominent critical components. This debate, nevertheless, has not yet been reflected in the CSU manifestos; hence the party has still been coded highly supportive of the European Union.

The **Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP)** joins an EU-friendly position with a liberal economic policy. Despite its clear liberal economic stance and the present financial and economic crisis, the FDP currently enjoys a never before seen support in national surveys. At the moment it is clearly the third strongest party in Germany. The FDP hopes for a coalition

with the CDU and CSU after the national election in September but hesitates to rule out the so called “street light coalition” (SPD, FDP, the Greens). The EU Profiler clearly highlights the programmatic closeness to the two Christian parties. The “street light coalition”, which has been stressed especially by the SPD, on the other hand, shows considerable differences on the socioeconomic axis.

Two right-wing extremist parties were included into the EU Profiler. Both, the **German People’s Union (DVU)** as well as the **Republicans**, harshly attack European integration in their programmes. They totally reject the European Union and prefer a so called “Europe of Fatherlands”, which does not include any supranational structures. The DVU shows characteristics of a single-issue-party since there are no positions of the national party with regard to the left-right-axis. Its manifesto nearly exclusively contains demands for a restriction of immigration and the abolishment of the European Union. The Republicans, on the other hand, combine a hostile stance towards Europe with a right-wing economic policy. Both parties are momentarily not represented in the national or European parliament.

After their success in the election of the state parliament of Bavaria in 2008, the **Freie Wähler (Free Voters/ FW)** compete for the European Parliament for the first time. Their manifesto focuses on local effects of European integration. Despite their criticism on the European bureaucracy and their demand for more subsidiarity, the Free Voters are clearly pro-integration. They support the European Union but demand its democratization. The participation of the Free Voters in the European Parliamentary election might lead to losses of votes for the CSU, which then might risk failing the nation-wide 5%-threshold.

Another newcomer in this year’s election to the European Parliament is the party **Newropeans**. The Newropeans defines itself as the first transeuropean movement; it wants to participate in all member states under the same name and with the same programme and advocates the democratization of the European Union as well as a deepening of the integration process. Within the political landscape of Germany, the Newropeans is the party most pro-integration. With its position it even gets ahead of the otherwise very EU-friendly elite consensus of the national German parties.