



Your European political home?

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Visit the website euprofiler.eu and you can complete a questionnaire that will, on the basis of your responses on a number of social and economic issues, tell you where you place within the European political spectrum – and enable you to see to which parliamentary grouping you are closest.

The 2009 European Parliament elections will see some changes in the political landscape, not only through the outcome of voting – which, according to a sampling of 19 national polls will give the largest share of seats to the European People's Party, with the Party of European Socialists second – but also through some changes in the make-up of the parliamentary groups.

The newly-elected European Parliament will have an increased limit to form a parliamentary group, from 20 MEPs and a fifth of member states, to 25 MEPs from at least a quarter of member states, a rule that could eliminate some of the European Parliament's current smaller groups. Currently, there are seven groups in the European Parliament.

The EPP-ED Group - the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats unites Christian Democrat, Conservative and other mainstream centre and centre-right political forces. The socialist group brings together 32 socialist, social democratic and labour parties. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe represents, as its name suggests, the liberal tradition.

Predicted by polls to place fourth is the GUE-NGL group – the European United Left-Nordic Green Left, followed by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance. A number of groups may be affected not only by voting but also by shifts at national level, for example the telegraphed intention of the UK's Conservative Party to quit the EPP. Reports have suggested that the post-election European Parliament may include a new group, possibly to be called European Conservatives.

A factor to watch, which while it is not expected to scoop up sufficient votes to be a dominant player, will be Libertas, which will draw Euro-sceptic and protest votes. It describes itself as "dedicated to creating a new, democratic and open European Union, from the ground up". It has its roots in a group set up in Ireland to oppose Irish approval of the Lisbon Treaty, and has won supporters in other EU countries that condemn the EU and its institutions as unrepresentative, bloated and bureaucratic, with an alleged hidden agenda to suppress civil rights and create an EU-wide conscript army.

Date and place

Voting in European elections is staggered over a number of days, mainly to take into account individual countries' traditions about when elections are held. In the June 4 to 7 2009 elections, results will only be known after the final round of elections on the final day – and in any case, most countries are holding their elections on the Sunday.

June 4: United Kingdom, the Netherlands (97 MEPs)

June 5: Ireland, Czech Republic day 1 (12 MEPs)

June 6: Czech Republic day 2, Cyprus, Italy day 1, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia, (54 MEPs)

June 7: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy day 2, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden (561 MEPs).