An evaluation of the ecological performance of the European Parliament

2019 – 2024
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Just a few months ahead of the European elections from 6-9 June 2024, BLOOM unveils an unprecedented in-depth assessment of the environmental performance of the European Parliament’s political groups as well as the national delegations formed by MEPs from 27 different nationalities during the 2019-2024 term.

We analyzed the votes cast by the 853 MEPs who have sat in the European Parliament over the past five years on 150 crucial amendments and votes on four topics: preserving the oceans and artisanal fisheries, fighting climate change, protecting biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, and, finally, promoting environmental justice. On the basis of the votes cast by the 853 MEPs (there are 705 of them at any given moment, but changes during their electoral mandate increases the number of individuals to be assessed altogether), we were able to establish the precise environmental performance of the European Parliament’s eight political groups and entire national delegations. Who really championed these key issues in Parliament? The answers could transform the June 2024 vote.

The result is clear: the European Parliament is deeply divided into three highly polarized groups. On the one hand, there are the “builders” of the ecological ambition of the European Parliament: the ecological left-wing bloc formed by the Greens/European Free Alliance, the Social Democrats and The Left, whose scores fluctuate between 16.6 and 19.8 out of 20. It is thanks to them that the European Union has been able to achieve important environmental progress, such as stricter emission standards for combustion engine vehicles, a new regulation to fight the import of products linked to deforestation, and a preliminary approval of an European Directive on Corporate Due Diligence. The Greens/EFA group came in first place in our ranking, with a near-perfect score of 19.78/20. The Greens/EFA group is closely followed by the leftmost group in the European Parliament, The Left. The Left scores an equally impressive 19.04/20. Behind, the Group of European Socialists and Democrats (S&D) scores 16.65/20. Not bad, but there is still significant room for improvement for S&D in order to be considered truly exemplary on the protection of the planet.

On the opposite side, the far-right and conservative groups, with their appalling environmental performance, did everything they could to use their votes to undermine all measures in favor of the planet, but also the health and rights of citizens and workers, including farmers and fishers. The result was expected: these parties acted like vandals sabo-
taging the ambition of some of the most important texts of the European Green Deal in recent years, often turning them into empty shells. The far-right groups of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and Identity et Democracy (ID) are at the bottom of our ranking, with an average score of 2.53/20 and 3.34/20 respectively. The European People’s Party does no better, with a derisory score of 3.79/20. The podium of ecological vandals includes some of the best-known faces in the European far-right and climate denialist galaxy: the worst planet destroyers are the Hungarian EPP delegation (with 1.81/20), the Spanish ECR delegation (with 1.82/20, to which belongs the far-right party VOX), the Polish ECR delegation (of which Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, the former leading party in the Polish government until 2023, is the leading member) with a score of 1.86/20, the Italian EPP delegation (with 1.99/20 and including the party founded by Silvio Berlusconi, Forza Italia) and the Italian delegation of Identity and Democracy (formed by the MEPs of Lega, scoring 2.06/20).

However, none of the two blocs, neither the eco-builders nor the planet vandals, can single-handedly win a majority in the European Parliament to make their political agenda prevail. This is where the group "Renew" comes into play, as it holds the future of all European legislation in its hands with its central position and pivotal role. Although they try to present themselves as promoters of ecology and defenders of the environment, our analysis shows beyond doubt Renew’s true nature: that of a coalition lacking compass and political conviction on environmental issues, jeopardizing essential bills and sometimes even leading to their rejection.

With an overall score of 11.91/20, the Renew group includes parties with the most disparate ecological positions. The arc of incoherence ranges from delegations that refuse to make any progress on environmental protection, such as the Czech (5.41/20) and German (5.52/20) delegations, to delegations with almost exemplary performance, such as the Slovaks, who scored 16.95/20, or the Polish delegation, with 17.27/20. Unlike the other political groups, Renew’s deputies almost never vote as a bloc, splitting on most crucial texts. Since Renew’s MEPs cannot be counted on to pursue an ambitious environmental policy, every vote in the European Parliament becomes Russian roulette. The liberal group has thus been a brake and a thorn in the side to the adoption of truly ambitious environmental measures during the last term.

Our study, based on the concrete legislative activity of MEPs, will enable citizens to know the true ecological and social consciousness of European parties, beyond public announcements and false promises. The detailed results and overall scores of the political groups and political parties that sat in the European Parliament during the last legislative term for the various issues we considered (Ocean, Climate, Biodiversity and Environmental Justice) are available on our website, with full country-by-country details.

Visit our website: ipolitics.bloomassocation.org
GROUPS AND PARTIES, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Throughout this report, we will refer to "political groups", "national delegations" and "parties". The three terms should not be confused:

**parties** are the national political organizations that coordinate candidates for elections, while **groups** are the European political alliances that bring together the various national parties in the European Parliament and coordinate their activity in order to give coherence to their votes and facilitate parliamentary negotiations.

**Delegations**, on the other hand, refer to all MEPs in a given member state who belong to a given group. The MEPs of a delegation can be attached to different parties. For example, the French delegation of Renew includes the following parties: *Renaissance, MoDem, Horizons, Agir - La Droite constructive, Mouvement Radical Social-Libéral* and *Parti Radical*. 

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In the last parliamentary term, environmental policies played a more central role than ever before. The new term of the European Commission had opened in 2019 with the launch by President Ursula von der Leyen of the now famous European Green Deal,\(^1\) aimed at ensuring an adequate European response to the environmental crisis we are confronted with. The cut of transport-related emissions, a “green revolution” of industries, the transition to renewable energy, the development of the circular economy, and the protection of marine and terrestrial biodiversity are its main goals and have been translated into a long series of European regulations and directives aimed at putting them into practice. This European strategic plan is extremely ambitious, so much so that it has been compared to the race for the first man on the moon.\(^2\) And it could not be otherwise. The climate crisis and the collapse of biodiversity are a threat to all of humanity, and policymakers must take measures that match the urgency of the situation. The European Green Deal was not the only crucial legislative moment for the planet that was voted on during the past term. Other pieces of legislation with a great impact on ecosystems and workers, but not directly related to the Green Deal, have marked these past five years, such as the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP),\(^3\) the drafting of Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive\(^4\) or also the reform of the regulations on the control of fishing activities of the European fleets.\(^5\)

Ahead of the end of the current legislative term and the elections for the renewal of the European Parliament, which will be held on June 6-9, 2024, BLOOM decided to take an in-depth look at the votes cast by European political groups on environmental matters to assess the ecological performance of national parties represented in the European Parliament. Which groups have been up to the planetary challenges of our time? Who took the side of the planet and the workers who depend on its good health such as fishers and farmers? Who has stood up against the overwhelming power of industrial lobbies and been able to defend social and environmental justice? Answering these questions is essential to bring clarity to the political landscape in the run-up to the elections and to enable citizens to make an informed choice when they vote in June.

The results are crystal clear. Over the past five years, European environmental policies have found themselves in a dramatically unstable balance. On the one hand, groups on the left fringe of parliament have formed a globally united front in support of measures to defend the environment,

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3 European Commission: [Common agricultural policy](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap_en)


5 European Commission: [EU fisheries control system](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/en/legislation/fisheries-control-system)
environmental justice, and the sustainable transition of economic practices, particularly fishing and agriculture. On the other side of the political scale, the conservative right-wing groups barraged against almost all such maneuvers, resulting in extremely low scores in our analysis, all below 4/20. The liberal right represented a deciding factor in this spiny situation. In contrast to the other political groups, which for better or worse have shown consistency in voting, the Renew group appeared to lack a real political agenda on ecological issues. Voting at times in favor of progressive measures, at other times for anti-ecological positions and in favor of industrial interests, Renew MEPs have also very often found themselves divided within their own group in their voting choices on some key texts. All at great risk to European environmental policy ambition, since it is impossible for both the pro-environmental left-wing and the anti-ecological right-wing fronts to obtain the majority needed to pass a legislative bill, without the support of a good majority of Renew MEPs.

150 votes for the ocean, climate, biodiversity, and environmental justice.

The votes of the European Parliament have important and concrete impacts on the everyday lives of EU citizens and on the environment. For example, the European Parliament helps to define subsidy plans for fishers and farmers in EU Member States, who receive a large portion of public subventions precisely from Europe. A vote in the European Parliament can make the difference between a great victory for the planet or a dangerous defeat. Concrete, positive measures for the planet, citizens’ health, and justice for workers and citizens have been numerous in recent years. From the ban on most bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides to the end of polluting internal combustion engine cars in 2035, along with the introduction of a European fund to support families in the energy transition. It is in the European Parliament that BLOOM has won some of its most important victories, such as the ban on deep-sea bottom trawling or on electric fishing.

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6 European Commission: [Neonicotinoids](#)
7 European Parliament (2022): [EU ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035 explained](#)
8 BLOOM (2016): [Europe bans deep-sea bottom trawling at long, long last!](#)
9 BLOOM (2019): [Victory - electric fishing will be banned in Europe in 2021.](#)
Thus, each vote in this institution carries tremendous weight and determines the ambition and ecological consciousness of MEPs. To carry out our analysis of the ecological performance of the EU political groups and European national delegations, we selected 150 votes held during the current term of the European Parliament, sorted into four categories:

Through these votes, MEPs were invited to cast their votes on amendments of great importance in defining the political ambition and legislative effectiveness of the texts under analysis (for example, amendments to increase greenhouse gas reduction targets or to tighten and clarify certain regulatory frameworks).

In the selection process, we also prioritized amendments for which BLOOM or other NGOs provided voting recommendations to parliamentary groups in order to select the most relevant votes, for which MEPs could not ignore the impact their vote would have on nature. By defining for each MEP how he or she voted for these 150 amendments, we were thus able to calculate a mark from 0 to 20 for the political groups they belong to and the national political parties they represent.

You can find our full methodology and the precise list of all 150 votes we considered and the reasons why we selected them [here](#).
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: WHAT IS ITS FUNCTION AND HOW IS IT COMPOSED?

The European Parliament is one of the three most important political institutions of the European Union, along with the European Commission and the Council of the European Union (which brings together the national ministers of the 27 Member States, ). The European Parliament does not directly draft the laws it will vote on, a task that falls to the European Commission. MEPs adopt legislative initiatives, which then need to be taken up by the Commission before they are actually drafted and voted on. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have the task of representing the citizens in this co-legislative process of amending the texts drafted by the European Commission. The MEPs also have the task of voting for and approving the Commission’s president and commissioners proposed by national governments represented by the Council.  

The role of the European Parliament is therefore essential to bring the voice of European citizens to the heart of the institutions and to contribute to the drafting of laws and regulations that are fair to all. For this, MEPs have to be accountable for their work and have the duty to defend the rights of their fellow citizens. Elections for the renewal of the European Parliament take place every five years.

MEPs, in particular, are affiliated to European political “groups”, which are made up of MEPs from various countries and political parties coming together in the European Parliament. These groups, described in detail on pages 11 to 18, cover the entire political spectrum: the radical left represented by the group The Left, the ecologists of the Greens/EFA group, the socialist left of S&D, the liberal right of Renew, the conservative Christian-Democrat right of the EPP, and the conservative and nationalist far-right of the ECR and ID groups. MEPs and parties that are not part of one of these groups are defined as “non-attached”.

As of today, the European Parliament has 705 MEPs, coming from the 27 EU Member States in proportion to their population, with Germany, France, Italy, and Spain representing the four largest delegations in the Parliament (with 96, 79, 76, and 56 MEPs respectively). Before the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union in 2020, there were 751 parliamentarians, including 73 representing the UK. Of these 73 seats, 27 were redistributed among the remaining states. To provide the most complete and correct analysis of legislative activity in the last term, our study also takes into account the votes of British MEPs. For more information on the methodology used to calculate marks, refer to the box on pages 26 and 27 or our website. 

10 For more details on the European institutions and their role, see the website of the European Union.  
11 https://ipolitics.bloomassociation.org/fr/methodology


A quick overview on European political groups

The graph below, which reveals the ecological performance of the European groups on the 150 votes we selected, and which details the groups’ performance on the four topics covered, speaks volumes. The claim that ecology "is neither left nor right" is radically refuted.

On the one hand, all left-wing groups get excellent marks, bordering on perfection in some cases. The conservative and far-right in contrast uniformly gets appallingly low marks, demonstrating that they not only lack ecological sensitivity, but also relentlessly fight to uphold the status quo, even if this leads to the complete destruction of the environment we depend on.

In between, stands Renew’s liberal group, the real deceiver of this mandate. No matter how much Renew boasts a pro-environment public image, it gets a totally mediocre result. In the run-up to the June elections, for which a shift to the right of the European Parliament is currently expected, a mobilization of the electorate to support pro-environment parties across Europe is more urgent than ever.

Let’s look in more detail at the results of the different European groups and national parties in the largest countries of the European Union. Diving into the votes of the EU political groups and Europe’s largest political parties allows us to better understand who does really care about the environment, and who stands with industrial lobbyists at the expense of the climate, biodiversity, and our future.
The builders of European ecological ambition

**Greens/EFA**[^1] (Greens and the European Free Alliance) is the parliamentary group uniting the European Green parties and the regionalist and progressive European Free Alliance. With 72[^2] members, it is the fourth largest political group in the European Parliament. Left-oriented, progressive, and pro-European, this group makes ecology and pro-environmental policies its political banner. This translates into a remarkable environmental performance: the Greens/EFA have a very high score, close to 20/20, on all subjects we report on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment Justice</th>
<th>19.9/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>19.7/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>19.6/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>19.9/20</td>
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**The Left**[^3] (formerly GUE/NGL) is the group that stands furthest to the left on the political chessboard of the European Parliament. Its MEP seek to promote workers’ rights, the environment, feminism, human rights, and are against free-market oriented policies and Atlanticist positions. It is the smallest group in the Parliament, with 37 members. Our analysis shows that their votes clearly line up in favor of pro-environmental policies, with a near-perfect score on all four issues we studied, arriving second in our ranking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment Justice</th>
<th>19.8/20</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>18.1/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>19.2/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>19.2/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^2]: Here we show the number of MEPs active in the European Parliament and registered with the groups in February 2024.
[^3]: https://left.eu/
S&D (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) is the second largest Group in the European Parliament, with 140 MEPs sitting in its ranks. It is composed by the members of the historic European Socialist Party and other progressive national parties. This political group has increasingly integrated environmental issues over the years, gradually leaving aside the productivist and less environmentally conscious positions that characterized it in the past. This translates into a good score and an improvement compared to the analysis we conducted in 2019. Though, there still remains important room for improvement, mainly due to some MEPs who generally voted for anti-environmental positions during the last term.
The hypocrites: Renew Europe and its lack of an environmental agenda

Renew Europe is the liberal right group in the European Parliament, created in 2019 during the last EU elections with the fusion of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European Democratic Party (EDP) and the French Renaissance group. Liberal-oriented and in favor of the free market, Renew’s MEPs claim to be in favor of an economy-friendly ecological policy based on technological solutions. With 102 registered MEPs, it is the third largest political group in the EU. Despite the fact that Renew proclaims to be an environmentally friendly coalition, our analysis shows that the voting pattern of its members is highly inconsistent: while some of its members resolutely vote in favor of environmentally friendly positions, an equally significant number of its members are aligned with much less enlightened positions. This results in the most disparate intra-group ecological performances, ranging from those with extremely low scores, such as the delegations of the Czech Republic (5.43/20) and Germany (5.52/20), to delegations with almost exemplary performances, as in the case of the Slovak and Polish ones, which achieve a score of 16.95/20 and 17.27/20 respectively. For this reason, Renew gets an overall mediocre score.

Our conclusion is that this political group does not follow a common voting agenda on environmental matters, thus representing a loose cannon in the European Parliament. This created a major challenge throughout this legislature, since an amendment could hardly pass the majority cap without the support from Renew, while the voting pattern of Renew remained unpredictable. Further proof that Renew totally lacks unity and a real ecological political agenda: their overall ecological performance and the dispersion of the votes of their national member parties are almost identical to the ones of the non-attached MEPs, an amalgam that includes the most disparate political parties, from the anti-European far-right of Viktor Orban’s party, Fidesz, to parties with an exemplary ecological orientation such as the Italian Movimento 5 Stelle. In other words, Renew has the same voting consistency of all the unattached parties, each voting for itself and without following a group agenda. Embarrassing, to say the least, for a group that proclaims to be moved by an ecological conscience.
Two Examples Where Renew’s Lack of an Ecological Agenda Put Nature and Artisanal Workers on Edge

One of the most important votes that took place in 2023 was undoubtedly the one related to the Nature Restoration Law, a crucial text to safeguard biodiversity and restore degraded habitats within the EU, with the goal of restoring 30% of degraded habitats by 2030 and 90% by 2050. The assumption underlying this measure is simple: without healthy habitats and the resilient biodiversity they harbor, there can be no future for agriculture or fisheries (and consequently for the EU’s food autonomy) and more generally for the entire economy of the continent.

As we had already shown at the time, the Renew group had done everything possible to deprive this bill of ambition and effectiveness during the preparatory work conducted in the Parliament’s fisheries, agriculture, and environment committees. In this way, Renew stood in a common front with the European far-right and conservative right to nip in the bud one of the most ambitious environmental programs of the legislature. This irresponsible position was confirmed during the plenary vote on the bill, where Renew was deeply divided, leaving the outcome of the vote hanging in the balance until the very end.

Primarily, one-third of the 97 present Renew MEPs either voted to reject the bill in its entirety (27 MEPs) or abstained (7 MEPs), thus siding with the right and far-right of the Parliament. The amendment to reject the whole bill from the outset, without delving into the specific amendments was rejected by a handful of votes (324 against, 312 in favor), but once the individual amendments were voted on, Renew continued to prove totally fractured, ending up helping the anti-ecological bloc undermine most of the most ambitious articles of the Nature Restoration Law (such as Amendment 21 which sought to limit habitat restoration to Natura 2000 areas and to eliminate quantitative habitat restoration targets, which passed by 322 votes to 320 thanks to Renew’s division on this vote).

17 BLOOM (2023): The sabotage of a crucial European law in favour of nature
Renew’s inconsistent stance on environmental issues came out once again in stark clarity in a vote held at the Parliament on January 18 2024 on a report concerning the European Commission’s Action Plan for "protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries".\(^{18}\)

This action plan has been deeply criticized by strident advocates of industrial fishing and especially bottom trawling, among other things in that it requires Member States to phase out bottom contact fishing gear from marine protected areas. Not only did an overwhelmingly majority of Renew vote against the Commission’s call to phase out bottom trawling in Marine Protected Areas (thus fronting with the parliamentary right, but also with the S&D group, which on this issue remains tied to an extremely problematic position in favor of bottom trawling)\(^{19}\) but it also voted against the Commission’s whole action plan. Most of Renew MEPs also spoke out against the necessity of tackling the detrimental impacts of other destructive fishing techniques such as demersal seine, drifting nets, or Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)\(^{20}\), thus opposing the positions advocated by scientists and voted for by the left-wing groups in parliament.\(^{21}\) This second amendment would have been adopted by parliament if only the Renew Group had uniformly voted in its favor. The liberal right’s internal dissonance did not only go against environmental concerns, but also against safeguarding the future of artisanal fishers. One amendment to the text recalled the importance to put Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy into practice.\(^{22}\) This crucial article indeed calls on Member States to allocate fishing opportunities on the basis of transparent and objective criteria taking into account the social and environmental performance of fishing fleets.\(^{23}\) Supporting it should be an evidence for anyone who wants to defend the interests of small-scale fishers affected by industrial fishing and the depletion of fish stocks. Yet, in this case, too, the overwhelming majority of Renew MEPs spoke out against the amendment, just as did the right wing of the parliament. The same position was also defended by almost all of the members of the conservative and far-right groups, ECR and ID, despite the fact that in recent months, during the fishers’ and farmers’ protests, they have declared themselves their allies against the burden of the European bureaucracy. This vote speaks for itself about the hypocrisy of the European right on the issue of defending the precarious workers who guarantee the continent’s food sovereignty, shaking their hands in the streets to stick a knife in their backs in Parliament.

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\(^{18}\) European Parliament: [REPORT on the EU Action Plan: protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries](#)

\(^{19}\) We specifically refer here to the vote on amendment 10 to the report.

\(^{20}\) For an in dept analysis of Fish Aggregating Devices impacts on ecosystems, see our report [Tuna War Games](#).

\(^{21}\) We specifically refer here to the vote on amendment 11 to the report.

\(^{22}\) We specifically refer here to the vote on amendment 14 to the report.

\(^{23}\) [Regulation (EU) no 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#)
The vandals

**EPP** 24 (European People’s Party, Christian Democrats) is, with 177 MEPs, the largest political group in the European Parliament, as well as the oldest. It is a liberal, pro-European, and conservative party. It advocates a policy strongly in favor of business, market liberalization, as well as for an easing of environmental regulations, which are seen as an obstacle to economic activity.

The strongly anti-ecological stance of this group consequently leads to an appalling environmental performance on all four issues we analyzed.

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<tr>
<th>Environmental justice</th>
<th>Ocean</th>
<th>Climate</th>
<th>Biodiversity</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Global grade</strong></td>
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<td>3.8</td>
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<td>6.1 / 20</td>
<td>4.9 / 20</td>
<td>2.7 / 20</td>
<td>2.4 / 20</td>
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**ID** 25 (Identity and Democracy) is the most right-wing group in the hemicycle of the European Parliament, defending a eurosceptic, sovereignty and conservative political stance. Its members are profoundly critical of the EU’s environmental policies, which are seen as a hindrance to business activity and an unnecessary bureaucratic burden. Not surprisingly, the openly anti-ecological positions of this group result in an extremely worrying final score. **Identity and Democracy, like the other right-wing parties, proves to be wholly inadequate to the challenges that European policy will face in securing a liveable future for its citizens and future generations, but also to the long-term employment of workers engaged in the sectors most dependent on natural resources: farmers and artisanal fishers.** ID groups 59 MEPs to date, thus being the second smallest group in the European Parliament, but is expected to gain several seats in the next elections.

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<td>3.0 / 20</td>
<td>4.2 / 20</td>
<td>1.9 / 20</td>
<td>4.7 / 20</td>
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24 [https://www.eppgroup.eu/](https://www.eppgroup.eu/)  
25 [https://www.idgroup.eu/](https://www.idgroup.eu/)
**ECR** is a far-right conservative group in favor of a Europe in which EU institutions intervene "only where necessary", leaving individual Member States as much autonomy as possible. It has 68 MEPs enrolled to date and it is expected to gain several seats in the next elections. The group advocates for "an ambitious, incremental, and sensible" environmental policy but simultaneously refuses to bind businesses with additional norms. However, just like other right-wing groups, our analysis demonstrates that ECR's votes clearly undermine the European Union's environmental policies, weakening their content and thus jeopardizing the future and security of our continent and its environmental ambition.

**NI** is not a political group, but a name for the set of MEPs who do not join any of the above political groups. The term encompasses both individual MEPs and some national parties, such as Fidesz (the party of Viktor Orban) or Movimento 5 Stelle. Due to its heterogeneous nature, it is home to MEPs with extremely disparate positions spanning the entire political spectrum. For the same reason, these MEPs do not vote as a homogenous bloc but in full autonomy. To date, a total of 48 MEPs turn out to not be attached to any political group.

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26 [https://www.ecrgroup.eu/](https://www.ecrgroup.eu/)

27 ECR Group: *Visions for Europe - Protecting the global environment at a cost we can afford*
FAR RIGHT AT ITS WORST ON MOST IMPORTANT VOTES

Not all votes in the European Parliament carry the same political and legislative weight. The votes on own-initiative reports, for example, are not binding, since these reports published by the European Parliament seek to comment on already existing laws and to recommend possible changes to the Commission without making it mandatory for the Commission to follow suit. In other cases, the decisions taken by the Parliament have to be taken into account by the Council and the Commission in the legislative process, for example when it comes to the adoption of directives and regulations.

The 150 votes we studied cover both cases since they all contribute to the shaping of actual and future decision-making. We calculated separately the environmental performance of European political groups on binding and non-binding texts.

For most groups, the scores obtained are almost identical in the two instances, but the situation is quite different for the far-right groups ECR and ID. While these two groups perform very poorly on non-binding texts, with 3.2/20 and 4.5/20 respectively, their results are twice as bad when we look at their votes on legislative files, with their performance going as low as 1.9/20 and 2.2/20! In other words, these groups perform more poorly precisely when their votes have the most impact on the European Union’s environmental norms, testifying to a conscious sabotage of the European environmental policy.

More details on how we have made our calculations on binding and nonbinding votes and the full scores for the other parties can be found on our website, on the Methodology page.
European leaders and trailers

Which delegations are the leaders in Europe when it comes to environmental protection? Which are the worst? Here are the top and bottom five delegations in our ranking. 28

The EU’s top five

The top five delegations in terms of ecological performance are all from the Greens/EFA, demonstrating the exemplarity of this group. After the Danish delegation (formed by the Socialistisk Folkeparti), which obtained an astonishing 19.92/20 with its two MEPs, the French and Swedes completed the podium with equally near-perfect scores of 19.88/20 and 19.86/20 out of 150 votes. The Dutch and German greens are just a few hundredths of a point behind.

The EU’s bottom five

The list of the European Parliament’s worst performers includes some of the best-known names in the European far-right galaxy. Italy’s Lega, the main member of Identity and Democracy and an anti-European, anti-immigration and strongly conservative party, is in fifth-to-last place. Just behind them, other Italians, this time from the EPP delegation whose largest member party is Forza Italia (founded by Silvio Berlusconi). On the third step of the podium is the Polish ECR delegation, which includes the Polish nationalist party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość and whose ranks include ECR Group co-chairman Ryszard Antoni Legutko. The Spanish VOX deputies (the only members of the ECR delegation) are second to last, just ahead of the Hungarian EPP, which gets the title of Europe’s worst destroyers of the planet, surely not something to be proud of. One conclusion is clear: ecology and far-right political positions are totally incompatible, as evidenced by the fact that the most representative conservative parties and the most staunch defenders of far-right ideology obtain the worst positions in our ranking.

28 From the list below we have excluded delegations represented by only one MEP, since in this case the score would correspond to that of its only elected member. In the case of delegations including several MEPs, on the contrary, the score reflects the global delegation’s political agenda, beyond the personal sensitivities of individual MEPs. Delegations from the UK where equally excluded given their short activity during the ongoing mandate.
Focus on the European big four: Germany, France, Italy, and Spain

**Germany**  The results for Germany show a deeply divided country. On the one hand, the delegations of the three parliamentary groups of the green left all scored highly, including the fifth best score in Europe according to our ranking, awarded to the Greens/EFA delegation (19.86/20). The German Socialist delegation (whose sole member is the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, the second largest party in the S&D group along with the Italians from the *Partito Democratico*), also shows that it has been able to follow a remarkable political program over the last 5 years, ranking among the best in the Socialist bloc with 18.28/20. Unsurprisingly, the right-wing delegations all scored below 4/20.

However, the real black sheep in Germany are the Renew MPs (members of the *Freie Demokratische Partei* and *Freie Wähler parties*). The German Renew delegation, with a score of 5.52/20, are at the bottom of the group with their Czech counterparts.

The German Liberals also tried to block one of the most important pieces of legislation of the last five years, the Corporate Duty of Diligence Directive, in the Council vote.  

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29 Euronews (2024): *CSDDD: A tale of corporations hijacking the EU’s democratic process.*
France The table of results for the French delegations to the European Parliament is a rainbow covering all the shades of color in our analysis. From the deep green of the left-wing delegations of the Greens/EFA, The Left and S&D groups, with scores close to 20/20, to the deep red of the right-wing conservatives, passing by the yellow of the members of Renew. A number of observations are worth making. Firstly, the parties of the French moderate left (Parti Socialiste, Nouvelle Donne and Place Publique) won the title of best delegation of the Socialist Group with 19.03/20. The main drawback for the French S&D delegation is the score obtained on the Ocean (17.14/20) : a relevant proportion of French S&D MEPs are still too attached to a productivist and industrial vision of fishing, which earned them a less than exemplary score. Secondly, the ID delegation, home to France’s most-voted party in the 2019 European elections, the Rassemblement National (which, with 18 MEPs, is also the second-largest member of Identity and Democracy), has the worst average score, at 3.80/20. Thirdly, the largest French delegation, Renew (with 23 seats), achieves a good average of 14.63/20. Although the French delegation is not the lowest-scoring of the Renew group, its results are still not fully satisfying, especially considering that the chairmen of the European Parliament’s fisheries and environment committees, among the most important in shaping the Union’s environmental policies, belong to Renaissance. We’re a far from the impeccable social and ecological performance we’d expect from a delegation that has made ecology one of its flagships.
The Italian delegation with the most exemplary environmental record out of the 150 votes we examined was, unsurprisingly, that of the Greens/EFA (including former Movimento 5 Stelle MEPs). Movimento 5 Stelle is not a member of any European group and is therefore included among the Non-attached parties. Thanks to its exemplary environmental performance they contribute to the very high score achieved by all Italian NI MEPs. The Italian S&D (corresponding to the Partito Democratico, which with 16 MEPs is the second-largest S&D delegation after Spain) achieved an average score of 15.86/20, demonstrating a good ecological conscience but considerable room for improvement. In particular, they scored rather poorly (14.46/20) on the protection of marine habitats and artisanal fishing, a score largely explained by this delegation’s support for high-impact fishing practices, particularly bottom trawling. Finally, all the Italian right-wing delegations received appallingly low votes, all below 3/20. The ID (of which the Lega is the only party) and PPE delegations (to which the Forza Italia MEPs belong) are the fifth and fourth worst in our entire European ranking. With an extremely large and under-performing right-wing delegation and the main left-wing delegation performing poorly overall, Italy emerges as the worst country in terms of environmental protection among the EU’s big four.
Spain covers the whole spectrum of ecological sensitivity in our ranking. On the one hand, we have the two right-wing Spanish delegations of the PPE (Partido Popular) and ECR (VOX) which are among the worst in Europe. On the other hand, we have the absolutely exemplary parties of the Left and the Greens/EFA, who score almost perfectly on all the issues we have analyzed. We can see that protection of the oceans is the subject on which all the Spanish Left’s delegations score worst. In the country that represents the most important fishing interests in Europe and has one of the most developed industrial fishing fleets in the world, this must be seen as a wake-up call for the Spanish environmentalist bloc. This is particularly true of the S&D delegation (whose largest member is the Partido Socialista Obrero Español, which is also the largest party in the S&D group). The Spanish S&D, with 13.21/20, are well below the results of the other parties in the Socialist bloc. Given the weight of the Spanish S&D delegation, its meagre result considerably weakens the group’s overall result on ocean protection and artisanal fishers. Finally, the Spanish Renew delegation is perfectly in line with the rest of the liberal-right group.
A vote for the ocean, the climate, and livelihoods

The conclusion of our study is crystal clear. While the parties of the European ecological left helped build a sustainable future for Europe and its people, the right has been busy vandalizing and sabotaging these efforts, with the Renew Group calling the shots.

Having MEPs with a true and solid ecological backbone in Parliament can make the difference between a legislature of progress and concrete measures for the environment, and five years of environmental and social drawbacks. Unfortunately, the situation on the horizon is ominous, with polls predicting an escalation of far-right parties and a major regression in the number of seats to the most ecologically responsible groups. But polls remain polls, the outcome of the June elections is still all in play, and its outcome may look quite different. The decisive issue at stake remains for environmentally-minded voters to give their votes to candidates who will commit to working to defend the climate, the ocean, biodiversity and all those who most depend on them for their work. This study makes it clear which parties stand on either side of this confrontation of ideals.

To enable voters to better know the candidates and their commitment for the next term, BLOOM also developed for future MEPs a list of 15 points to save the ocean, climate and livelihoods. We asked candidates from the major European parties to sign a commitment to work toward these 15 points based on science and respect for ecological and social justice. Full details of our 15 recommendations and the list of candidates who have signed them can be found on our website. The next five cannot be wasted.
OUR METHODOLOGY TO SCORE EUROPEAN POLITICAL GROUPS

We analyzed the votes on 150 amendments tabled by the European Commission and by the different political groups during the 9th legislature of the European Parliament (2019-2024).

Based on their content, the amendments were categorized into four main subjects: Ocean (38), Climate (50), Biodiversity (35) and Environmental Justice (27). These amendments refer to a total of 52 texts of major relevance to EU environmental policies.

The chosen amendments are divided in amendments “for” and “against” nature, which allowed us to score points to voting MEPs as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of amendment</th>
<th>If you vote for</th>
<th>If you vote against</th>
<th>Abstention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amendments that protect the planet, that require an improvement of the text subject to a vote.</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendments nemies to the planet, requiring a weakening of the text subject to vote.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sum of these points was then calculated and calibrated to range from 0 to 20. We calculated an overall score and a score for each subject by national delegation and European political group. When calculating the scores we took into account the MEPs’ political affiliation at the time of the vote, rather than their current political group, as a number of MEPs have changed group during their term of office.
Votes for which an MEP was absent were not included in the calculation of the score. In addition, care was taken to consider the start and end dates of term of office of each MEP. Some MEPs arrived during the legislature to replace MEPs who had begun a mandate in their own country or who had left the parliament because of Brexit. For these MEPs, only the texts passed during their term of office were considered for the calculation of the score. This explains the possible discrepancies between the rating of a political group and the average individual rating of its member parties.

Amendments were selected based on the availability of detailed voting results ("roll call votes") in the Plenary meetings, since this information is available only for amendments of a certain importance. In the selection process, we also prioritized amendments for which BLOOM or other NGOs provided voting recommendations to parliamentary groups in order to select the most relevant votes, for which MEPs could not ignore the impact their vote would have on nature. We considered the votes of the European Parliament’s Plenary from the beginning of the term of office until the plenary sitting of January 2024 (included).

Data analysts from the NGO Data For Good developed an extraction tool specifically tailored for the European Parliament’s "roll call votes" records for BLOOM, which automatically retrieves the names of MEPs for targeted amendments. A total of 97,454 individual votes were automatically extracted.

Our list includes both legally binding votes (such as votes on regulations or directives) and non-binding votes aimed at giving legislative recommendations to the Commission (as in the case of own-initiative reports). We have chosen not to weight votes for binding and non-binding texts differently. Before making this choice, we calculated group scores through four different weighting simulations to determine if this significantly changed the results. However, the differences remain relatively small, which led us to choose not to weight the votes. Global results for different weighting simulations, as well as the detailed list of 52 texts, their legally binding value and the content of the 150 amendments selected for this in-depth analysis can be found on our website.
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