

Unveiling the Path Forward: Eu Green Policies Post-June 2024 Elections

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ABSTRACT

The European Green Deal (EGD), approved by the European (EU) Commission in 2019 and ratified by the EU Parliament in 2020, marks its fifth anniversary. Following the June 2024 EU political elections, which reshaped the Parliament, this study examines three key aspects: election outcomes, shifting power dynamics among political parties, and the ongoing formation of the EU Commission. Employing a qualitative approach, it assesses whether the EGD's original 2019 objectives will be realized or abandoned. Between 2019 and 2024, national elections in several EU member states brought government changes, with right-wing parties emphasizing the perceived negative impacts of the green transition. The findings suggest that the full implementation of the EGD is unlikely due to two main factors: first, the political parties that oppose the EGD's ideological framework emerged victorious in the June 2024 elections; second, although the EU Commission continues to receive political support from the same factions that endorsed the EGD in 2019, their influence has waned. Furthermore, the European People's Party, the largest political group in the EU Parliament, now views the EGD as excessively ideological and potentially harmful to industries and public welfare.

Keywords: EU Commission, EU Parliament, EU Green Policies, June 2024 Elections

INTRODUCTION

During the June 2024 electoral campaign, all political parties emphasized the EGD's significance, highlighting its widespread impact on citizens, businesses, the cost of living, and employment. However, despite these effects, it achieved little success in reducing CO₂ emissions, lowering global temperatures, or advancing decarbonization (Bonini, 2024).

After the June 2024 EU elections, the parliamentary seats were distributed as follows: the European People's Party (EPP) secured 191 seats, the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) 135, Patriots for Europe (PFE) 84, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) 78, Renew Europe (Liberals) 77, and the Greens 53, alongside smaller groups and independents. Political analysts agree that while the EPP and S&D maintained similar political influence compared to five years ago - EPP gaining 9 seats and the S&D losing 2 - the most notable shift was the significant decline of the Greens, who saw a loss of 18 seats, and Renew Europe, which experienced a reduction of 19, coupled with the rise of right-wing parties, historically opposed to the ideological framework of the EGD. The ECR and PFE gained 10 and 35 seats, respectively, compared to the 2019 elections (Biondi, 2024). Following the elections, negotiations began to appoint the EU Commission president. On 18 July 2024, Ursula Von Der Leyen was confirmed for a second term, receiving 401 votes in favor, 284 against, and 15 abstentions, supported by the same political coalition that had elected her in 2019: EPP, S&D, and Renew Europe (Piccolo, 2024).

In her inaugural speech, President Von Der Leyen reaffirmed her commitment to the core principles of the 2019 Green Revolution, strongly backed by the S&D and Greens. However, she notably avoided the term “Green Deal”, instead referring to a “Clean Industrial Deal”. This rhetorical shift signals a substantive change, acknowledging that environmental protection and decarbonization must align with worker welfare and economic competitiveness. Implicitly, it recognizes that the original EGD contributed to economic hardship, GDP decline in several member states, and job losses in key sectors such as agriculture and automotive industries (Sicilia, 2024).

Both President Von Der Leyen and her party, the EPP, appeared to respond to mounting protests by EU farmers, who, frustrated by EGD-imposed constraints, staged demonstrations in Brussels - the capital of Belgium and seat of the EU Commission and Parliament - from February to June 2024 (Cappellini, 2024; Martarello, 2024). In her inauguration speech, Von Der Leyen dedicated only a brief segment to the green transition, a stark contrast to 2019, when it was a central theme. Instead, her 2024 address prioritized migration, security, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Middle Eastern wars, and EU military expenditures for 2024–2029. Some EU policy experts suggest this shift indicates that green policies may no longer be a top priority (Pacheco, 2024).

The June 6–9, 2024, elections marked a turning point, reshaping political dynamics across the continent. Right-wing political forces, long critical of the EGD for its ideological nature and limited global impact due to the EU’s small territorial scope, emerged as key victors (Coen, 2024). This rightward shift raises concerns about its potential impact on EU policies, spanning areas such as security, the green and digital transition, as well as trade and industrial policies. More broadly, these elections have resulted in a more fragmented and complex EU political landscape, which is likely to slow down its decision-making processes (Villafranca, 2024). As right-wing influence grows, negotiations on environmental policies under the Clean Industrial Deal are expected to become more challenging.

The EGD, launched in 2019 to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, now faces reconsideration, if not dismantling. Notably, Manfred Weber, the leader of the EPP, along with other prominent members of his group, has already proposed reviewing the planned 2035 ban on internal combustion engine vehicle sales, a key EGD measure (Visconti, 2024). The changing priorities and concerns of EU voters are evident. The ongoing economic challenges, including double-digit inflation, insecurity within countries, and rising illegal immigration, have driven support for right-wing parties, perceived as more attuned to citizens’ concerns (Vittoria, 2024). A May 2024 Termometro *Politico* survey found that the Green Deal is not among the top priorities for four million EU citizens aged 18 to 60.

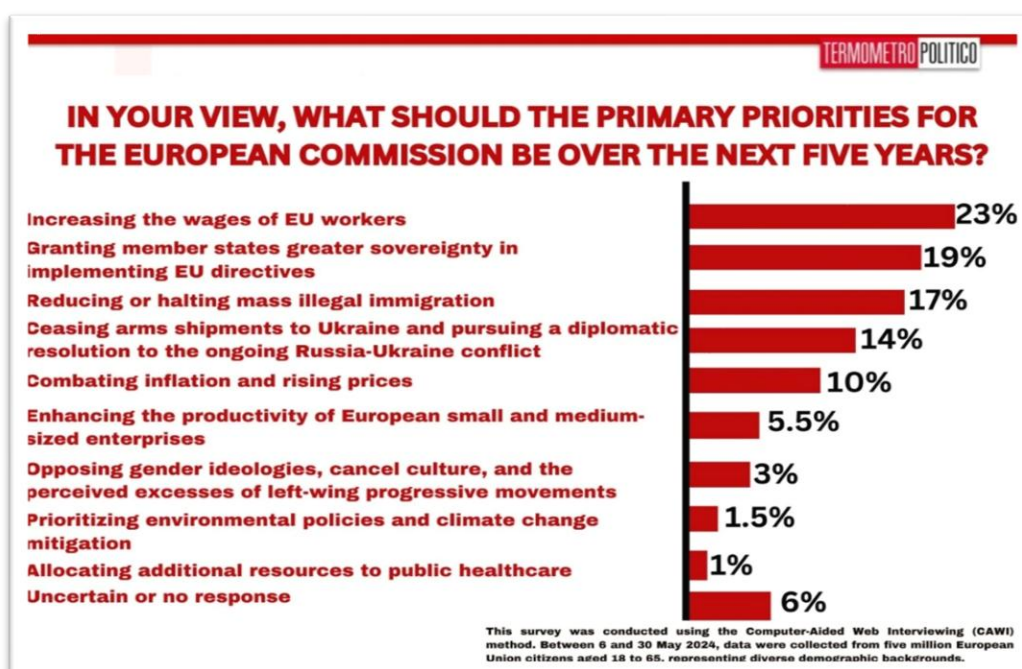


Figure 1. It illustrates the results of May 2024 survey on the key issues EU citizens wish the new Commission to address. (Source: https://www.termometropolitico.it/1620078_sondaggi-tp-temi-elezioni-europee-2024.html)

To make well-founded predictions about the future of EU green policies, several key factors must be considered. First, the EU Commission's full formation remains incomplete, as its 26 commissioners - each overseeing a specific policy area - must still undergo parliamentary approval. Until this process is finalized, the Commission cannot exercise full executive authority (Lerda, 2024). Second, the balance of power between right-wing and socialist parties within member states is pivotal. In recent national, regional, and municipal elections held alongside or shortly after the EU elections, right-wing parties prevailed over left-wing counterparts in Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. Notably, Austria's Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) secured 29.8% of the vote, France's Rassemblement National (RN) 33.1%, Germany's Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) 33.5%, and Hungary's Fidesz 49%. The growing influence of far-right parties is poised to shape EU Commission decisions, particularly regarding ecological transition, while weakening the Greens, who received their lowest electoral support across the EU (Cisternino, 2024). Thus, the political strength of right-wing parties at both EU and national levels is set to influence EU policymaking throughout the 2024–2029 legislative term (Neri, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The adoption of the EGD in 2019 was primarily driven by political motivations rather than scientific considerations. The initiative was launched with promises of public investments amounting to hundreds of billions of euros, aimed at transforming EU into a continent free from pollution and significantly reducing CO₂ emissions while serving as a “model of behavior” for other global powers, particularly India, China, and Russia. However, widespread protests by farmers across EU countries have highlighted the extent of political polarization surrounding the EGD and its accelerated implementation measures. Notably, the EPP, which backed the initiative in 2019, has since taken a more cautious and pragmatic approach to the ecological transition (Sassi, 2024).

In his 2024 work *Maledetta Europa, non è uno Stato, non ha un popolo* (Damn Europe, it is not a State, it does not safeguard people), Gianluigi Paragone critiques the EU's shortcomings in areas such as migration, fiscal and monetary policy, and ecological transition. Paragone asserts that the EU, founded on the principles of currency and market primacy, has replaced politics with finance, governance with markets, and societal welfare with capital. Real power in EU, he argues, rests with banks and multinational corporations, which have been permitted by political decisions to undermine national constitutions, social welfare systems, and the real economy. This, he claims, has failed to benefit citizens, as the EU remains incapable of competing as a global power alongside nations such as China, Russia, the United States, and India. The EGD exemplifies this disconnection, as its adoption disregarded the specific economic and industrial realities of individual member states. Paragone further contends that public investments promised in 2019 to support the ecological transition were largely redirected towards defense spending following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022. Consequently, the ecological ambitions of the EGD appear subordinated to geopolitical and financial priorities, leaving the needs and rights of ordinary citizens unmet.

Nicola Porro's *La grande bugia verde* (The Big Green Lie, 2024) critiques the EGD as a fundamentally political project based on flawed scientific premises. Porro argues that EU Institutions have avoided rigorously scrutinizing the scientific foundations of climate change and global warming. He contends that the views of numerous scientists, often dismissively labeled as “deniers”, have been systematically ignored for political purposes. The book is organized into three sections. The first challenges the notion that human activity is the primary driver of climate change, emphasizing the minimal influence of human actions compared to natural phenomena such as volcanic eruptions and solar radiation. The second part disputes the claim that extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and droughts, are uniquely modern occurrences, asserting that these phenomena have been part of Earth's natural history. The third section examines the substantial financial costs of the green transition and the vested economic interests tied to it. Drawing from research by experts in fields including physics, geology, climatology, meteorology, economics, and engineering, Porro underscores the lack of consensus among scientists regarding the extent of human influence on climate change. He distinguishes between pollution and climate change, noting that while the former is a pressing concern, the latter is a periodic natural phenomenon. Porro also critiques the conflation of meteorology, a probabilistic science with short-term reliability, with climatology. He highlights the views of Uberto Crescenti, an eminent professor of applied

geology and former President of the Italian Geological Society, who describes human impact on climate change as one of the greatest scientific fallacies in history. Crescenti supports his claims with studies showing a lack of correlation between rising CO₂ emissions and global temperature increases. Porro argues that scientists who challenge catastrophic narratives have been marginalized by the media, as the “green” movement has become synonymous with immense financial gain, particularly through the global CO₂ market, which is controlled by powerful financial interests. He asserts that opposing the so-called ecological transition, which is championed by certain political factions, is a stance against these entrenched powers. According to Porro, this battle is critical to preserving the liberal economic model that has historically underpinned the prosperity of the Western world. The stakes, he argues, extend to safeguarding the economic and social freedoms of Western society. The Big Green Lie seeks to disrupt the prevailing mainstream narrative, providing a platform for scientists who rely on empirical data to present findings untainted by political agendas or popular trends. Porro’s work invites readers to engage with a well-documented and impartial perspective on a contemporary issue that profoundly affects the daily lives of EU citizens.

Several studies have underscored that during its first five years, the EGD failed to produce measurable positive effects on CO₂ emissions, global warming, and pollution at a global scale.

The 2024 United Nations Environmental Protection Agency (UNEP) Emission Gap Report reveals that the planet remains far from achieving the target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. If greenhouse gas emissions persist at current levels, global temperatures are projected to increase by 3°C compared to pre-industrial levels by 2100, with a more realistic estimate indicating a rise of 2.5°C by the end of the century. In 2022, emissions grew by 1.2% from the previous year, reaching an unprecedented record of 57.4 billion tons of CO₂.

According to UNEP, a collective global commitment is required to achieve a 42% reduction in annual greenhouse gas emissions within the next five years and a 57% reduction by 2035, relative to 2019 levels. These targets underscore the critical need for immediate and drastic action. However, the report emphasizes the improbability of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, noting that even under the most optimistic scenarios, the likelihood of achieving this target is only 14%. Moreover, the scenarios considered indicate a significant probability of exceeding 2°C or even 3°C of warming. Despite these challenges, UNEP stresses the urgency of accelerating efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as even a fractional increase in global temperatures exacerbates the impacts of climate change. Achieving this acceleration, however, hinges on addressing a fundamental issue that international climate summits have largely neglected: the necessity of abandoning fossil fuels. The study further illustrates that EU’s unilateral actions are insufficient to address the root causes of climate change, emphasizing the need for coordinated global efforts to mitigate this existential threat.

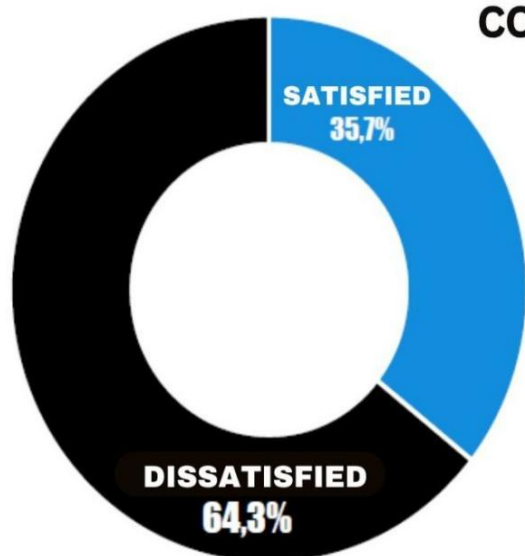
The September 2024 report from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the 2023 European State of the Climate, compiled by the Copernicus Climate Change Service, caution that there is a two-thirds probability of reaching the 1.5°C global temperature increase threshold - as stipulated by the countries that signed the 2016 Paris Agreement - within the next five years. Furthermore, there is a 98% likelihood that at least one of these will be the hottest on record. Under current climate policies, global temperatures are projected to rise by an average of 2.7°C by the end of the century, significantly surpassing any temperature changes the Earth has previously experienced. Scientists warn that such an increase would have catastrophic consequences, marking the potential end of life as we know it. If only EU implements stringent climate policies the global climate goals will remain unattainable (Saulo, 2024). The studies referenced underscore that climate change and global warming are widespread challenges, impacting the entire planet. It is therefore illogical for these issues to be addressed by a geographically limited minority such as EU countries, which bear minimal responsibility for their onset. Nevertheless, the EGD has triggered significant challenges for the economies of EU member states and the well-being of their citizens. For instance, several studies (Bucur, 2024; Bremmer et al., 2022) suggest that, in striving for environmental sustainability, EU risks plunging its entire economy into a state of social and economic instability. These studies indicate that agricultural production, food exports, and trade are set to decline. As a result, the EU is poised to suffer losses in GDP and competitiveness, which would negatively impact the well-being of its population. This situation predicts worsening food insecurity, rising prices, and heightened social tensions, ultimately diminishing consumer prosperity and overall societal well-being.

Newsletters from Opendemocracy (an independent international media platform covering news, ideas, and

political and cultural issues) highlight that the EGD has already encountered criticism and sparked tensions between the environmentally progressive western part of the continent and the coal-dependent eastern regions, between corporations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and between the EU and its trade partners. Furthermore, disagreements over its objectives and timeline have emerged, with concerns regarding the potential impact on jobs and competitiveness. The EU Commission has acknowledged that the green transition will not be straightforward, estimating that an additional €700 billion in annual investments will be necessary to meet its targets. It also recognizes that it will produce both winners and losers (Iacometti, 2024). Industrial sectors, such as the EU automotive industry, are predicted to be severely affected, with signs of crisis already evident. Major brands like Audi, Maserati, Renault, and Volkswagen have announced factory closures, workforce reductions, and wage cuts ranging from 15 to 30 percent for all employees (Butler, 2024). The re-election of Ursula Von Der Leyen was met with widespread dissatisfaction among EU citizens, many of whom perceive EU institutions as ineffective in protecting their interests. This sentiment is reflected in the results of a survey conducted by the polling institute *La Piazza* in July 2024. Among six million EU citizens aged 18 to 65, 64.3% expressed dissatisfaction with Von Der Leyen's second mandate.



ARE YOU SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED WITH URSULA VON DER LEYEN'S RE-ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION?



Data collection was conducted through interviews via landline and mobile phones. Between 8 and 30 July 2024, a total of six million EU citizens, aged 18 to 65 and representing diverse backgrounds, participated in the survey.

Figure 2. It depicts the survey outcomes, conducted by *La Piazza* in July 2024. (Source: <https://www.affaritaliani.it/esteri/sondaggio-la-piazza-internazionale-933429.html>)

In France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Spain, nearly 90% of online comments regarding Mrs. Von Der Leyen's re-election were negative, according to data collected between July and September 2024 (Ferraro, 2024). These figures reflect widespread public discontent and a sense of detachment from EU decision-making in Brussels and Strasbourg.

EU citizens' disenchantment is further exacerbated by scandals such as the Qatargate, which involved several members of the EU Institutions being accused of corruption and arrested for possessing millions of euros in cash at their homes. Qatargate has raised significant concerns about the transparency, democratic legitimacy, and political integrity of the EU, reinforcing the derogatory perception of EU officials as "Eurobureaucrats" (Vasques, 2022). Despite the seriousness of the scandal, the EU Institutions have refused to establish an ethical oversight body within the Parliament to address conflicts of interest among parliamentarians, or to promote greater transparency in political decisions. This refusal has contributed to growing public distrust,

disillusionment, anger, and a sense of powerlessness among citizens toward the EU Institutions (Schmulow et al., 2022). Evidence of this discontent is reflected in declining voter turnout, with fewer than 50% of eligible citizens participating in recent elections (Ruffino, 2024).

Research Aims and Questions

The primary objective of this research is to examine the outcomes of the June 2024 EU legislative elections. More specifically, this study aims to:

1. Analyze the distribution of power among the political parties that secured the highest number of votes.
2. Investigate the political composition of the newly formed EU Commission post-June 2024 elections, as well as the evolving dynamics between the two most influential political groups within the EU Parliament (the EEP and the S&D).
3. Explore the potential influence of newly emerging right-wing political factions on the EU Commission's policy decisions, particularly in relation to the implementation of the EGD.

To achieve these objectives, this paper addresses the following research questions:

1. Will the S&D political group continue to support the recently re-elected President Ursula Von Der Leyen?
2. Will the EEP - having supported Ursula Von Der Leyen's re-election - and other right-wing political groups, which do not align with her, collaborate on key issues such as illegal immigration and the green transition?
3. Is there a likelihood of a shift in the political majority that supported President Von Der Leyen's re-election for a second mandate in the near future?

By addressing these questions, the study seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of the EU Commission's political trajectory and its capacity to sustain the green revolution initiated in 2019 with the adoption of the EGD.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the discourse surrounding contemporary EU politics. The methodology is structured as follows:

Study Design: This research employs a case study methodology, which is well-established for investigating complex issues within their real-life context (Yin, 2018). The case study approach enables an in-depth analysis of specific political events and their broader implications. By focusing on the outcomes of the June 2024 elections, the shifting balance of power among political groups in the EU Parliament, and their stances on the EGD, the study aims to uncover the dynamics that shape political decision-making within the EU.

Data Collection: The data collection process involves a systematic review of multiple sources to capture diverse perspectives on EU politics. This includes official statements and speeches by politicians across various political groups, expert analyses on EU policy and governance, and contemporary media sources such as international newspaper articles and online videos featuring public debates. The research also examines interviews with former and current EU politicians, as well as insights from political pundits. This multi-source approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the political discourse, providing both primary and secondary data to enrich the study.

Data Analysis: The collected data undergoes rigorous qualitative examination using thematic and discourse analysis techniques. These methods allow for the identification of recurring themes, rhetorical strategies, and the socio-economic-political implications embedded in the actions and ideologies of EU political groups. Thematic analysis helps organize and interpret the data by grouping it into categories reflecting the major issues under discussion, while discourse analysis examines the language and framing used by political actors. This combined approach enables a deep understanding of how political narratives are constructed and the impact they have on policy debates, particularly regarding the EGD.

The qualitative approach employed in this study facilitates an in-depth exploration of the socio-political dynamics at play in contemporary EU politics. By focusing on the discursive strategies of political groups, the study aims to uncover the underlying power structures and ideological conflicts that shape decision-making within the EU, especially concerning the green transition and climate policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A preliminary and superficial analysis of the June 2024 elections suggests that the balance of power among the political groups in the EU Parliament remains largely unchanged. The reappointment of Roberta Metsola as President of the Parliament on 16 July 2024, alongside the selection of 14 vice-presidents, reflects a political landscape that mirrors the dynamics of the past five years. The coalition comprising the EPP, S&D, and Renew Europe, which has historically steered the EU's direction, continues to hold a majority and maintain control over EU institutions.

However, right-wing and far-right parties achieved significant gains. Although these groups have been excluded from leadership roles in the Commission due to a “sanitary cordon” policy designed to limit their influence (Negri, 2024), they have secured critical roles within parliamentary committees. Notably, the ECR now leads over a dozen committees, including the influential Committee on the Environment, which oversees EGD policies (Vohra, 2024).

One of the most striking outcomes of the June 2024 elections is the sharp decline of the Greens, driven by widespread opposition to environmental directives on housing, mobility, and agriculture. These policies, seen as rigid and ideologically motivated, have strained national economies and imposed heavy financial burdens on citizens.

Beyond political and economic concerns, deeper conceptual objections to the EGD persist. Critics argue that an EU landscape dominated by wind turbines and solar panels, in pursuit of green objectives, is as uninhabitable as one devastated by climate change. Such transformations, they contend, erode human well-being as profoundly as chemical pollution (Casadei, 2024).

Political science underscores that electoral outcomes should be assessed not just numerically but in terms of broader implications, akin to evaluating financial assets. Thus, while the EU Parliament's majority remains unchanged, this does not ensure the continued implementation of the 2019 EGD (Bottini, 2024).

The “Sanitary Cordon” against specific political parties

Following the establishment of parliamentary committees, the PFE filed an appeal with the EU Court of Justice to annul all committee appointments, arguing that the “sanitary cordon” imposed by the majority coalition supporting President Von Der Leyen violates the EU's rule of law. Despite being the third-largest parliamentary group, the PFE claims it was entirely excluded from leadership roles, unlike smaller factions.

The PFE contends this exclusion breaches several provisions of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure, notably Article 34, which mandates that committee appointments reflect political diversity, and Article 219, which requires committee leadership to mirror the institution's composition. The group further argues that the policy infringes upon fundamental EU legal provisions, including Article 10 of the EU Treaty and Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which guarantee all Members of Parliament the right to fully exercise their mandates (Rosini, 2024). As a result, the PFE demands fair representation in all EU Parliament governing bodies, free from discrimination (Grossi, 2024).

This legal challenge is expected to delay parliamentary committee proceedings until the EU Court rules on the legitimacy of this sanitary cordon. Furthermore, the rationale for applying it solely to the PFE remains unclear, as other right-wing factions have not faced similar restrictions (De La Feld, 2024).

New Political Dynamics within the EU

The re-election of President Ursula Von Der Leyen may suggest continuity within the EU institutions, yet the

political landscape has shifted rightward, as reflected in the electoral success of the ECR and PFE groups (Gravino, 2024). Unlike national parliaments, where clear majorities and oppositions exist, the EU Parliament operates through flexible alliances shaped by national interests, legislative priorities, and regional sensitivities rather than a strict left-right divide. This dynamic fosters shifting alliances, preventing stable majorities. The legislative process follows the “institutional triangle” model, wherein nearly all initiatives originate from the Commission and require joint approval by the Council and Parliament. The European Council, comprising heads of state or government, sets the EU’s strategic direction. Currently, of the 27 member states, 14 are led by center-right governments (9 EPP, 3 ECR, 2 PFE), while S&D and Liberals lead four each, with the remaining five categorized as “independent” (Guglielmi, 2024).

National governments, often coalitions, influence the EU Council, but decision-making depends not only on numerical majorities. Notably, 80% of decisions require a qualified majority-approval from 55% of member states representing at least 65% of the EU population (European Council, 2024). A center-right majority in the Council suggests the next Commission will likely be more conservative than its 2019 predecessor. The Commission, operating collegially, comprises one Commissioner per member state, with collective decision-making authority (De Remigis, 2024).

The extent of the political shift to the right within the EU will depend also on the results of upcoming elections in key countries such as Germany, France, and Spain, due to the influence of their large populations. However, in the current EU Parliament, the left is already in the minority. To fully grasp the current balance of power, it is crucial to examine the newly formed parliamentary committees, such as the Environment Committee (ENVI) and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs (LIBE). LIBE, with 75 MEPs, shows that the combined left-wing bloc, including the Liberals, accounts for only 33 seats, while the center-right bloc holds 40. Similarly, ENVI, which consists of 90 MEPs, is dominated by the center-right, with the center-left and Liberals only reaching 40 seats, while the EPP, ECR, and PFE together hold 45. This pattern is consistent across most of the 20 parliamentary committees, including those on Agriculture and Trade. The numbers alone suggest that, despite the political weight of certain groups, the left does not command a majority. Furthermore, an analysis of the Renew Europe group reveals that at least 22 of its 77 MEPs align more closely with the positions of the EPP and ECR. As a result, on pivotal issues such as the EGD, the center-right is poised to dominate parliamentary decision-making. Considering the political composition of the Council and the Commission, the EU institutions have undergone a notable rightward shift following the June 9, 2024, elections (Giubilei, 2024).

The Decline of the Political Alliance between the European People’s Party and the Socialists

The alliance between the EPP and S&D, which led the previous Commission, appears unlikely to persist. In the months following the elections, divisions between these major groups have become increasingly evident, not only to political analysts but also to MEPs. The EPP insists on maintaining dialogue with right-wing factions, ECR and PFE, despite S&D’s opposition, arguing that these parties represent millions of voters who demand protection for key industries - such as automotive manufacturing and agriculture - against an ideologically driven EGD that overlooks social justice. Consequently, the EPP contends that right-wing parties should not be excluded from the new Commission’s decision-making on ideological grounds.

Acknowledging the need to reassess past policies, the EPP argues that previous decisions have yielded negative economic outcomes. Since 2019, the EU economy has declined, inflation has surged, energy costs have risen, and both businesses and citizens have faced significant financial strain. Right-wing parties have capitalized on these concerns, channeling public discontent (De Palo, 2024). The EPP has officially withdrawn support for the EGD in the automotive sector, citing its adverse impact on employment. The transition to electric vehicles, they argue, risks triggering social unrest, as evidenced by mass layoffs and salary reductions affecting workers, who are prepared to protest in Brussels, similar to the farmer demonstrations of early 2024 (Benigni, 2024). As the EU’s largest political group, the EPP aligns with vehicle manufacturers who argue that the 2035 ban on internal combustion engine cars is unfeasible. They contend that the EGD imposes overly ambitious targets and mandates reliance on electric technology, which depends on scarce raw materials not readily available in the EU. In 2008, EU countries accounted for nearly 31% of global vehicle production, while China produced 13%. By 2023, these figures had reversed, with the EU’s share dropping below 19% and China’s rising to 32%, signaling a potential collapse of the European automotive sector (Ferraro, 2024).

On 19 September 2024, the EU Parliament adopted a resolution recognizing Edmundo González Urrutia's presidency of Venezuela as "legitimate and democratically elected", condemning Nicolás Maduro's regime, and denouncing human rights violations. The resolution passed with 309 votes in favor, 201 against, and 12 abstentions. The EPP, along with right-wing groups, opposed S&D and the Greens, while Renew Europe abstained.

The resolution also urged member states to reinstate sanctions on Venezuela's National Electoral Council, proposed an "International Arrest Warrant" for Maduro, and called for increased international pressure on his regime (Carlino, 2024). The alignment between the EPP and right-wing parties on this issue has solidified a structured majority, now referred to as the "Venezuela Majority" in political and media discourse. This coalition is expected to shape the EU Commission's agenda throughout the 2024–2029 legislature, in contrast to the fragile "Ursula Majority" alliance between the EPP and S&D in the previous term (Valdambrini, 2024).

On 17 October 2024, eleven European leaders (five from the EPP, two from ECR, and four from PFE) urged the Commission to swiftly introduce legislation to expedite migrant repatriation. The proposal includes establishing processing hubs outside the EU to address illegal immigration. This reflects the EU's rightward political shift following the June elections. Notably, the S&D group was excluded, expressing concerns over a potential EPP alliance with right-wing sovereigntists on migration (Della Croce, 2024).

On 22 October 2024, S&D leader Iratxe García Pérez threatened to withdraw support for President Von der Leyen if she pursued new approaches to irregular immigration. The S&D strongly opposes outsourcing migration management, rejecting models like those implemented by the Italian and Danish governments, where asylum seekers are detained in non-EU countries during application processing (Argento, 2024; Tito, 2024).

On 14 November 2024, the EU Parliament voted to delay the Deforestation Regulation by one year. The EPP, ECR, and PFE aligned against the S&D and Greens. Originally adopted in 2023 as part of the EGD, the regulation bans the sale of deforestation-linked raw materials, such as cocoa and palm oil, in the EU, with compliance deadlines set for December 2024 for large enterprises and mid-2025 for SMEs. The postponement sparked debate, with the S&D calling it a "serious setback in the fight against climate change" (Cantarini, 2024). In response, the Commission proposed extending the deadlines to late 2025 and mid-2026, which Parliament approved with 371 votes in favor, 240 against, and 30 abstentions. According to the S&D, the EPP's position signals a break from past agreements and alignment with far-right forces (Di Niro, 2024).

Following Donald Trump's victory over Kamala Harris, the S&D urged President Von Der Leyen to delete her account from X, citing its owner, Elon Musk, as a Trump ally and a threat to democracy. While many left-wing figures left the platform in protest, Von Der Leyen congratulated President Trump, posting: "I warmly congratulate Donald J. Trump. The EU and the US are more than just allies; we are bound by a true partnership, uniting 800 million citizens. Let's work together on a strong transatlantic agenda". Her remarks provoked backlash from EU socialists, who view Donald Trump as a fascist and a danger to democratic freedoms (De Conto, 2024).

Another point of contention between the EPP and S&D is the nomination of Commissioners who will assist President Von Der Leyen in leading the EU Commission. Of the 27 designated Commissioners - one per member state - 15 belong to the EPP, four to S&D, five to Renew Europe, two are independent, and only Raffaele Fitto represents the ECR. This distribution underscores the widening rift between the EPP and S&D. Von Der Leyen is set to present the full Commission and her program in Strasbourg on 28 November 2024, with the new Commission expected to take office on 1 December, pending parliamentary approval. However, these deadlines are unlikely to be adhered to (Balsamo, 2024). The S&D opposes Fitto's nomination, arguing that it would shift the Commission too far to the right and empower a political group they accuse of undermining the rule of law and environmental protections (De Vico, 2024).

Former EU Commission President Romano Prodi has acknowledged the irreparable divide between Von Der Leyen and the S&D. He warns that appointing Fitto as Executive Vice President would disrupt the Commission's political balance and threaten existing EPP-S&D commitments. Prodi and the S&D fear that granting the ECR a position within the EU Commission could pave the way for further expansion of the right-wing majority,

potentially incorporating other groups such as the PFE, thereby eroding the firewall against it, which would ultimately be subject to judicial scrutiny (Prodi, 2024; Dastoli, 2024).

If the S&D group rejects Commissioner Raffaele Fitto, the EPP, in turn, will withhold support for Spanish Commissioner Teresa Ribera, designated to lead the “Clean, Fair, and Competitive Transition”. Previously, Frans Timmermans, as Executive Vice President and Commissioner for the EGD and Climate Action, held a similar role. The shift in terminology - from “Green Deal and Climate Action” to “Clean, Fair, and Competitive Transition” - signals a less ideologically driven approach to EU environmental policy (Milanesi, 2023; Indini, 2022).

The EPP argues that Ribera’s environmental stance is detached from socio-economic realities, citing her advocacy for banning diesel and petrol cars by 2035, a measure they claim threatens the automotive sector’s competitiveness. Ribera defends her position, emphasizing the need for ambitious emissions reduction policies, including binding CO2 performance targets for vehicles (Vega, 2024). The EPP, aligning with right-wing groups, deems her position “radical and unrealistic”, contending that an abrupt transition would burden the EU automotive industry and cost thousands of jobs. After the June 2024 elections, the EPP started emphasizing the global nature of environmental challenges, arguing that unilateral EU policies are ineffective while major polluters like China, India, and the U.S. pursue divergent energy strategies (Capezzone, 2024). Meanwhile, the so-called “Venezuela majority” is consolidating as a stable and influential force in the EU Parliament, overshadowing the “Ursula Majority” that secured Von Der Leyen’s election in July 2024. Although this coalition is expected to back the new Commission and its commissioners in November, the political landscape has shifted decisively rightward. With center-right parties expanding their influence, the progressive agenda of the previous legislature is increasingly untenable. The Von Der Leyen Commission must now navigate this new reality, where the ambitious environmental policies of the EGD are widely seen as contributing to economic decline, diminished competitiveness, job losses, and rising poverty across EU member states (Guastamacchia, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The relationship between the two largest political groups in the EU Parliament has deteriorated significantly. The open conflict between the EPP and S&D is now evident, and it seems unlikely that the political majority that confirmed Ursula Von Der Leyen as President of the European Commission in July 2024 will be restored (Carretta, 2024). Two potential scenarios emerge. On one hand, a shift in the majority could occur, with the inclusion of the ECR and PFE, alongside the EPP. On the other hand, President Von Der Leyen could present her full commission - comprising 27 commissioners - to the EU Parliament and secure approval from those political groups that had not supported her in July 2024. In this case, the Commission would lack a fixed political majority, as in 2019, but could rely on fluctuating majorities depending on the specific measures proposed. This flexibility could lead to a faster, more dynamic decision-making process, with the Commission operating on a “two-oven” policy, free from prior constraints and avoiding protracted negotiations to reach agreements on specific issues (Chiellino, 2024).

Despite being the second-largest political group and formally part of the Commission’s majority, the S&D is no longer indispensable. Unlike in the previous term (2019-2024) past, it no longer holds a position of centrality. The 2019-2024 EU Commission was characterized by a political duopoly between the moderate right-wing EPP and left-wing S&D. In contrast, the EPP now holds a pivotal role. It will determine, on a case-by-case basis, which policies to support and with whom to negotiate, including the ECR and PFE when necessary (Signore, 2024).

The goal of climate neutrality by 2050 now appears increasingly utopian, and the EGD is beginning to clash with a multifaceted reality, encompassing political, economic, social, financial, and even geopolitical complexities. EU member states are becoming increasingly aware that the ecological transition and its associated decarbonization must be approached pragmatically, rather than ideologically, with due consideration for the needs of industries, agriculture, and other productive sectors, as well as the well-being of EU workers. Avoiding economic self-sabotage should be a priority, particularly as other nations continue exploiting fossil fuels (Villois, 2024).

On October 14, 2024, the EU Environment Council decided to consider nuclear energy as a viable alternative to fossil fuels and renewable energy sources. This decision, unthinkable just two years ago, was endorsed by the 27 Environment Ministers, with the sole opposition from the Greens, who view nuclear power as unsafe. Nevertheless, it is seen as an essential tool for decarbonizing the energy system and ensuring a sustainable transition without compromising the industrial competitiveness and productivity of EU enterprises. A proposal for its global utilization will be presented at the COP29 climate conference, scheduled for 11-22 November 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan (Lodige, 2024). These developments suggest that the original 2019 formulation of the EGD, which focused exclusively on electric solutions without considering alternatives such as nuclear or hydrogen, will not be pursued. The unanimous decision of the 27 environment ministers, adopted on 14 October 2024, indicates that EU countries are willing to prioritize new forms of clean energy, moving beyond past ideological approaches (Gentile, 2024).

Implications, Limitations, And Future Research

This study analyzes the outcomes of the June 2024 EU elections, the shifting balance of power within the EU Parliament, and the political coalitions supporting the incoming Commission under Ursula Von Der Leyen's second mandate. Politically, the supporters of the EGD - primarily the Greens and the S&D - have been disadvantaged in terms of representation in the latest EU elections. In contrast, right-wing and far-right parties, now constituting the third and fourth largest political groups in the Parliament, have consistently opposed the EGD, arguing that it is based on ideological assumptions that overlook the social and economic realities of industries and the well-being of citizens. The EPP, the largest parliamentary group, initially backed the EGD but has revised its stance and approach toward the green transition, aligning closely with right-wing political views (Sassi, 2024). These developments will shape the EGD's future trajectory.

However, this study has several significant limitations. While the EGD's adoption in 2019 was a political decision, its success hinges on financial feasibility. Achieving its goals requires substantial public funding, as neither EU enterprises nor citizens can bear the full cost of the ecological transition. Consequently, it is essential to assess the financial situation of EU institutions to determine whether they can sustain this funding, considering the EU's commitments to Ukraine - both for military support in the war against Russia and for the country's reconstruction once the conflict concludes (Massrali, 2024) - as well as to African nations through the so-called *Mattei Plan*, which aims to bolster and develop their economies to prevent mass migration from Africa to Europe (Ogno, 2024). Additionally, with member states mandated to allocate at least 3% of their GDP to defense spending, military budgets are rising sharply, as confirmed by the Armament Industry European Research Group and the European Strategy and Security Program (Scinetti & Virgadamo, 2024). The interplay between EU financial capacity and its ability to achieve EGD objectives warrants further research.

Another key factor is the potential impact of Donald Trump's recent U.S. election victory on EU climate policy. The forty-seventh president has announced his intention to withdraw his country from the Paris Climate Agreement - a global pact signed by 194 nations, including the EU, to limit global warming to below 2°C - via executive order on January 20, 2025, the day of his inauguration. Trump previously exited the accord in 2019, a decision reversed by Joe Biden upon taking office (Wray, 2024; Perdicchi, 2024). In his victory speech, Trump reaffirmed his energy agenda with slogans such as "Drill, drill, drill" and "Frack, frack, frack," signaling a renewed push for oil drilling and hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas (Luna, 2024). Given the EU's historical alignment with U.S. economic and geopolitical strategies, these policies are likely to influence EU climate initiatives. Political scientists argue that cultural, economic, and social trends originating in the U.S. often shape developments in Western Europe (Urbinati, 2024). Understanding the dynamics between the Trump administration and the EU, as well as the broader implications for the EGD, will be essential for future research.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of University Technology MARA (UiTM).

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that there are no conflicts of interest related to this publication. The study was conducted

independently, without any financial or personal relationships with individuals or organizations that could have influenced its outcomes.

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