



EU policy briefing

17 September 2026 · 14 dossiers

Executive summary

As the EU approaches the midpoint of the 2024–2029 term, its **busy legislative agenda** faces a difficult political climate. Many national leaders have **negative net approval**, **optimism is low** in the European countries surveyed, and **Eumatrix projects seat gains for parties to the right of the EPP in the 2029 European Parliament election**, compared with the current Parliament.

With the **cost of living leading citizens' priorities**, EU institutions face pressure to refocus on affordability, economic prospects and security. That pressure is reshaping spending choices, the balance between simplification and safeguards, and Council positions and parliamentary compromises on current files.

#1 Post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework proposals

Ongoing

Rapporteur: Carla TAVARES (S&D), Siegfried MUREȘAN (EPP) · Directorate-General for Budget (BUDG)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders **63**

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives **137**

Policy content:

1. Expands the regular EU budget, shifting funding towards defence, technology and research while cutting farm and regional allocations in real terms.
2. Gives national governments more spending discretion.

Status: Parliament adopted its negotiating mandate on 28 April 2026. The Irish presidency puts a revised negotiating box to the European Council in October, with leaders aiming for a deal by end-2026. Parliament's consent is required before the Council can adopt the MFF regulation unanimously.

Key cleavages:

1. Priority for defence and research vs farmers and regions.
2. More funding (sought by the European Parliament) vs contribution restraint (prioritised by the frugal countries).
3. National control vs regional involvement (contested by regions).

Latest event: 2026-04-28 — European Parliament adopted its resolution on the 2028–2034 MFF proposal

#2 European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034

Ongoing

Committee: Budgets / Regional Development / Agriculture and Rural Development (joint) · Rapporteur: RESSLER Karlo (EPP), NOVAKOV Andrey (EPP), KATAINEN Elsi (Renew) · Directorate-General for Budget (BUDG)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders **85**

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives **6**

Policy content:

1. Pools agriculture, cohesion and other funds into national plans, increasing spending flexibility.
2. Links payments to agreed reforms and protects minimum sectoral allocations.

Status: Draft committee report was published by the European Parliament, waiting for committee vote. Partial Council mandate ready. Tentative plenary 23 November 2026; progress depends on the MFF.

Key cleavages:

National plans giving governments discretion, with regions losing influence (backed by the Council) vs resisting centralisation (backed by Parliament and the Committee of the Regions).

Latest event: 2026-09-02 — Adoption of an opinion by the EP opinion-giving committee

Next: 2026-11-23 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#3 Common agricultural policy 2028-2034

Ongoing

Committee: Agriculture and Rural Development · Rapporteur: LINS Norbert (EPP) · Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders **280**

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives **51**

Policy content:

1. Redirects support towards smaller and young farmers through mandatory limits on large payments.
2. Integrates farm funding into national spending plans.
3. Eco-schemes and agri-environment and climate commitments would merge into a single instrument, with participation remaining voluntary for farmers.

Status: Draft report tabled; no committee vote scheduled yet. Parliament and Council await the MFF funding settlement.

Key cleavages:

1. Young and smaller farmers vs large recipients.
2. A protected farm budget (backed by farm-budget defenders) vs the CAP competing with other national spending priorities.

Latest event: 2026-09-07 — Deliberations in the Special Committee on Agriculture

#4 European Competitiveness Fund

Ongoing

Committee: Industry, Research and Energy · Rapporteur: EHLER Christian (EPP), NICA Dan (S&D) · Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (RTD)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [267](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [246](#)

Policy content:

Combines existing programmes into a larger industrial investment fund, prioritising defence, security, space and digital technologies.

Status:

1. EP committee vote still pending; plenary vote provisionally 23 November 2026.
2. Council has agreed its negotiating position on the fund's rules. Funding and budget-wide provisions remain open in the EU's 2028–2034 budget negotiations.

Key cleavages:

1. Funding for the strongest firms (wanted by France) vs guarding against richer countries capturing it (a concern of Romania, Portugal and Croatia).
2. Guaranteed health funding (wanted by patient groups) vs merging EU4Health into the European Competitiveness Fund.

Latest event: 2026-09-08 — Deliberations in Council working party

Next: 2026-11-23 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#5 Industrial Accelerator Act

Ongoing

Committee: INTA / ITRE / IMCO (joint) · Rapporteur: Anna Cavazzini (Greens/EFA), Christophe Grudler (Renew), Pierre Juvet (S&D) · Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [479](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [612](#)

Policy content:

1. Favours European and low-carbon production in public purchasing and support schemes.
2. Tightens conditions on foreign investment in strategic industries.

Status: Proposal published by the European Commission on 4 March 2026. Joint ITRE/IMCO/INTA draft report published by the European Parliament on 11 September 2026. Tentative plenary 14 December 2026.

Key cleavages:

Stronger European preference for EU manufacturers, at the risk of higher costs for import-dependent buyers (favoured by France) vs partner access, given retaliation risks (stressed by Germany).

Latest event: 2026-09-11 — EP committee draft report

Next: 2026-12-14 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#6 Public Procurement Act

Ongoing

Committee: Internal Market and Consumer Protection · Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [71](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [93](#)

Policy content:

Would replace the three 2014 procurement directives with one regulation, simplify procurement rules, and help buyers weigh environmental, social, innovation and resilience considerations. Public buyers could apply European preference while respecting access rights under EU procurement agreements.

Status: Proposal published by the European Commission on 9 September 2026. Negotiations targeted to finish by end-2027.

Key cleavages:

1. Domestic suppliers benefiting from EU preference vs buyers risking higher costs.
2. Binding labour safeguards (demanded by S&D).

Latest event: 2026-09-10 — Commission proposal transmitted to Council

#7 Amendments to the Critical Raw Materials Act

Ongoing

Committee: Industry, Research and Energy · Rapporteur: CHAHIM Mohammed (S&D) · Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [176](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [564](#)

Policy content:

1. Would require companies identified by the Commission to assess risks to strategic raw-material supplies and take steps to mitigate significant vulnerabilities, including through diversification, secondary raw materials or substitution.
2. Strengthens Commission oversight, including powers to set single-country reliance limits when significant vulnerabilities are detected, and expands permanent-magnet recycling requirements.

Status: Chahim (S&D) secured referral back to ITRE on 9 July to revise Parliament's negotiating mandate. Council is ready; trilogues await Parliament's revised mandate.

Key cleavages:

Commission influence over sourcing, with alternative suppliers and recyclers gaining opportunities and China-dependent manufacturers bearing diversification costs, vs corporate autonomy.

Latest event: 2026-07-09 — Plenary vote

Next: 2026-10-19 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#8 A new Circular Economy Act

Upcoming proposal

Committee: Environment, Climate and Food Safety · Directorate-General for Environment (ENV)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders **358**

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives **503**

Policy content:

Expected to establish a single market for secondary raw materials, increasing supply of high-quality recycled materials and stimulating EU demand, with the circularity rate to double from about 12% to 24% by 2030.

Status: Upcoming proposal, announced for Q3 2026, possibly being delayed to Q4.

Key cleavages:

Expected to favour EU recyclers over waste exporters vs avoiding costly recycled-content obligations (backed by manufacturers).

Publication date not yet confirmed

#9 European Biotech Act I (health-focused)

Ongoing

Committee: Committee on Public Health, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy · Rapporteur: Vytenis Povilas ANDRIUKAITIS (S-D), Wouter BEKE (EPP) · Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (SANTE)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders **227**

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives **38**

Policy content:

1. Accelerates biotech development through faster permitting, funding and regulatory testing.
2. Extends protection for qualifying medicines and tightens biosecurity controls.

Status: Committee vote scheduled for 1 December 2026. Council negotiating position still pending.

Key cleavages:

1. Originator biotech firms gaining protection vs biosimilar rivals facing delayed entry.
2. Financing opportunities for biotech developers.

Latest event: 2026-09-07 — Adoption of an opinion by the EP opinion-giving committee

Next: 2026-12-14 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#10 EU Emissions Trading System and market stability reserve: competitiveness and cost-effective decarbonisation

Ongoing

Directorate-General for Climate Action (CLIMA)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders 11

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives 2

Policy content:

1. Slows the tightening of the emissions cap and extends free allowances, conditional on industrial investment.
2. Adds flexibility through carbon removals and international credits.

Status: Proposal published by the European Commission on 17 July 2026. ENVI expected to lead with Liese. Inter-institutional agreement sought by Q1 2027.

Key cleavages:

Relief for high-emitting industries, at the risk of weaker returns for early decarbonisers (welcomed by the EPP) vs no weakening of carbon pricing (backed by Greens/EFA).

Latest event: 2026-09-04 — Deliberations in Council working party

Next: 2026-12-14 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#11 Proposal amending Regulation (EU) 2019/631 as regards CO2 emission performance standards for new light duty vehicles and vehicle labelling and repealing Directive 1999/94/EC

Ongoing

Committee: Environment, Climate and Food Safety · Rapporteur: SALINI Massimiliano (EPP) · Directorate-General for Climate Action (CLIMA)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders 160

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives 28

Policy content:

1. Softens future car and van CO2 targets and gives manufacturers more compliance flexibility.
2. Rewards small EU-made electric cars, cleaner steel and renewable fuels.

Status: Draft report tabled; waiting for committee vote. Tentative plenary 23 November; Council position targeted for 11 December 2026.

Key cleavages:

Softer targets giving combustion-focused carmakers flexibility, at the risk of weaker demand for EV investors (sought by Germany and Italy) vs defending the combustion phase-out (backed by France and Sweden).

Latest event: 2026-02-09 — Referral to committee (1st reading)

Next: 2026-11-23 — Indicative plenary sitting date, 1st reading

#12 Simplification and strengthening of food and feed safety requirements regulation

Ongoing

Committee: Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety, Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development · Rapporteur: Michele PICARO (ECR), Herbert DORFMANN (EPP) · Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (SANTE)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [116](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [162](#)

Policy content:

Eases pesticide approvals, removes most routine substance-approval expiry dates and speeds up biocontrol authorisation.

Status: Council mandate on this regulation not confirmed; the 27 May mandate concerns the separate directive. Tentative committee vote 5 October and plenary 19 October 2026.

Key cleavages:

1. Indefinite pesticide approvals giving suppliers security vs opposition to indefinite approvals (Greens/EFA).
2. Faster biocontrol access for developers (supported by Greens/EFA).

Latest event: 2026-07-28 — Tabling of amendments in the EP committee responsible

Next: 2026-09-22 — Deliberations in Council

#13 The Digital Omnibus Regulation Proposal

Ongoing

Committee: Industry, Research and Energy / Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (joint) · Rapporteur: SALLA Aura (EPP), KALJURAND Marina (S&D) · Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CNECT)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [369](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [307](#)

Policy content:

1. Consolidates EU data rules and reduces platform and reporting duties.
2. Relaxes some data-protection constraints, including for AI training.

Status: Draft report under discussion in the joint ITRE/LIBE committee; awaiting committee decision. Council mandate unresolved after its June vote was cancelled.

Key cleavages:

Simplification giving AI developers and marketplaces freedom, at the risk of weaker protections for users (promoted by the EPP) vs no weakening of data safeguards (backed by S&D).

#14 Digital Fairness Act and EU KIDS Act

DFA: upcoming · KIDS: ongoing

Committee: Internal Market and Consumer Protection (expected) · Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (JUST)

Meetings between MEPs and stakeholders [79](#)

Meetings between MEPs and EC representatives [421](#)

Policy content:

1. Digital Fairness Act (forthcoming): expected to curb dark patterns, unfair pricing, exploitative personalisation, addictive design and manipulative marketing for consumers of all ages.
2. EU KIDS Act (proposal): would bar under-13s from social media, allow only parent-supervised mini-accounts with limited features and time restrictions for 13–14-year-olds, and require safe design for 15–17-year-olds.

Status:

1. Digital Fairness Act: announced; proposal expected from the European Commission in autumn 2026, as confirmed by von der Leyen on 16 September. IMCO expected to lead.
2. EU KIDS Act: announced by von der Leyen on 16 September 2026; legislative proposal published by the European Commission on 17 September 2026.

Key cleavages:

Stronger protections for consumers, especially minors (pressed by S&D and Renew) vs limited further regulation for platforms

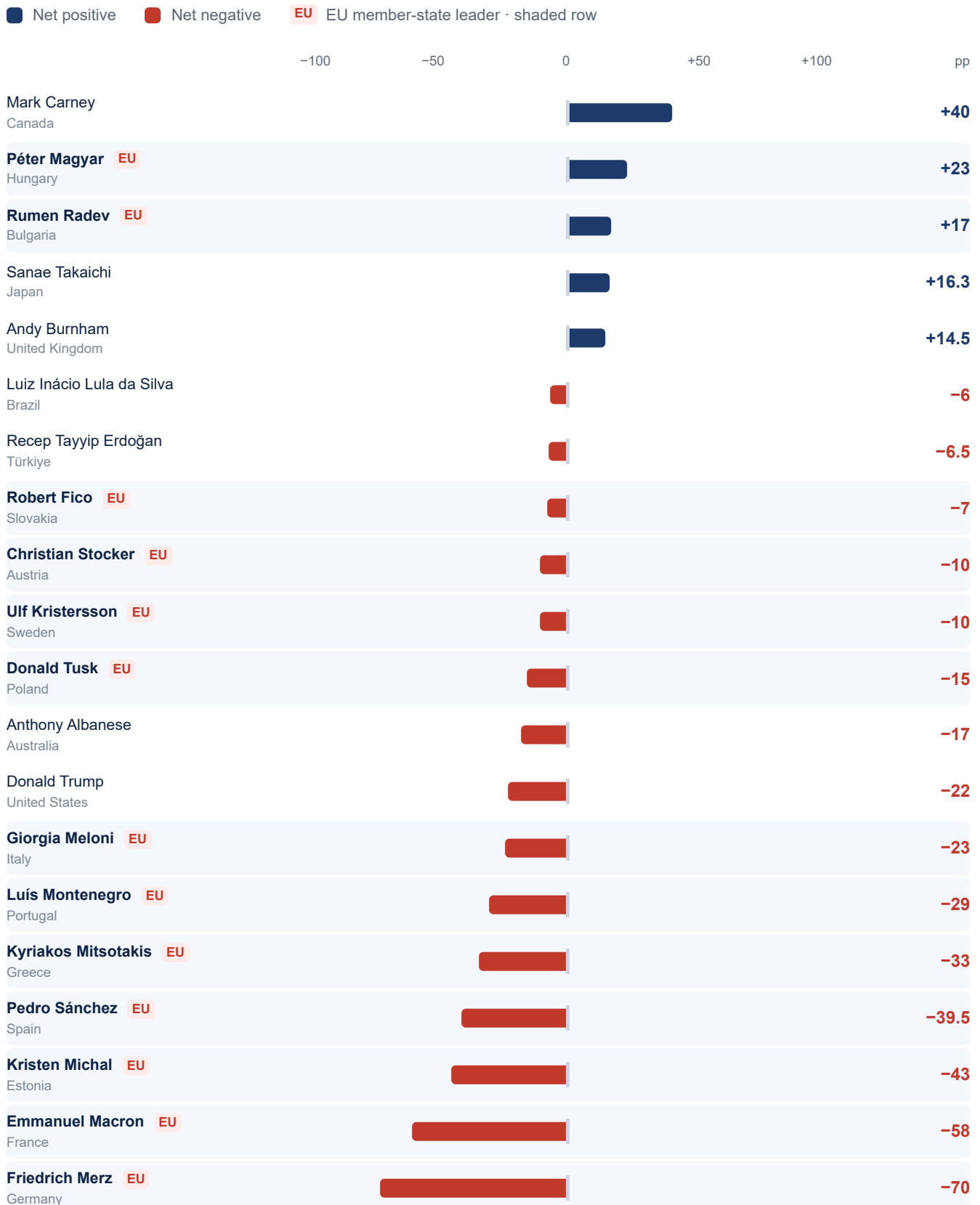
Latest event: 2026-09-17 — EU KIDS Act proposal published by the European Commission

Public opinion and Parliament projections

Citizens' approval of leaders

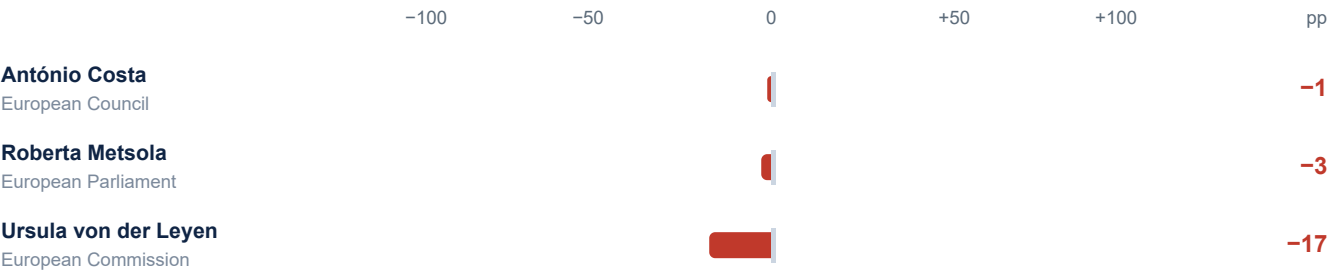
Net approval: approval minus disapproval, in percentage points.

National leaders · August 2026



EU Matrix compilation of national and international polls.

EU institution presidents · April 2026



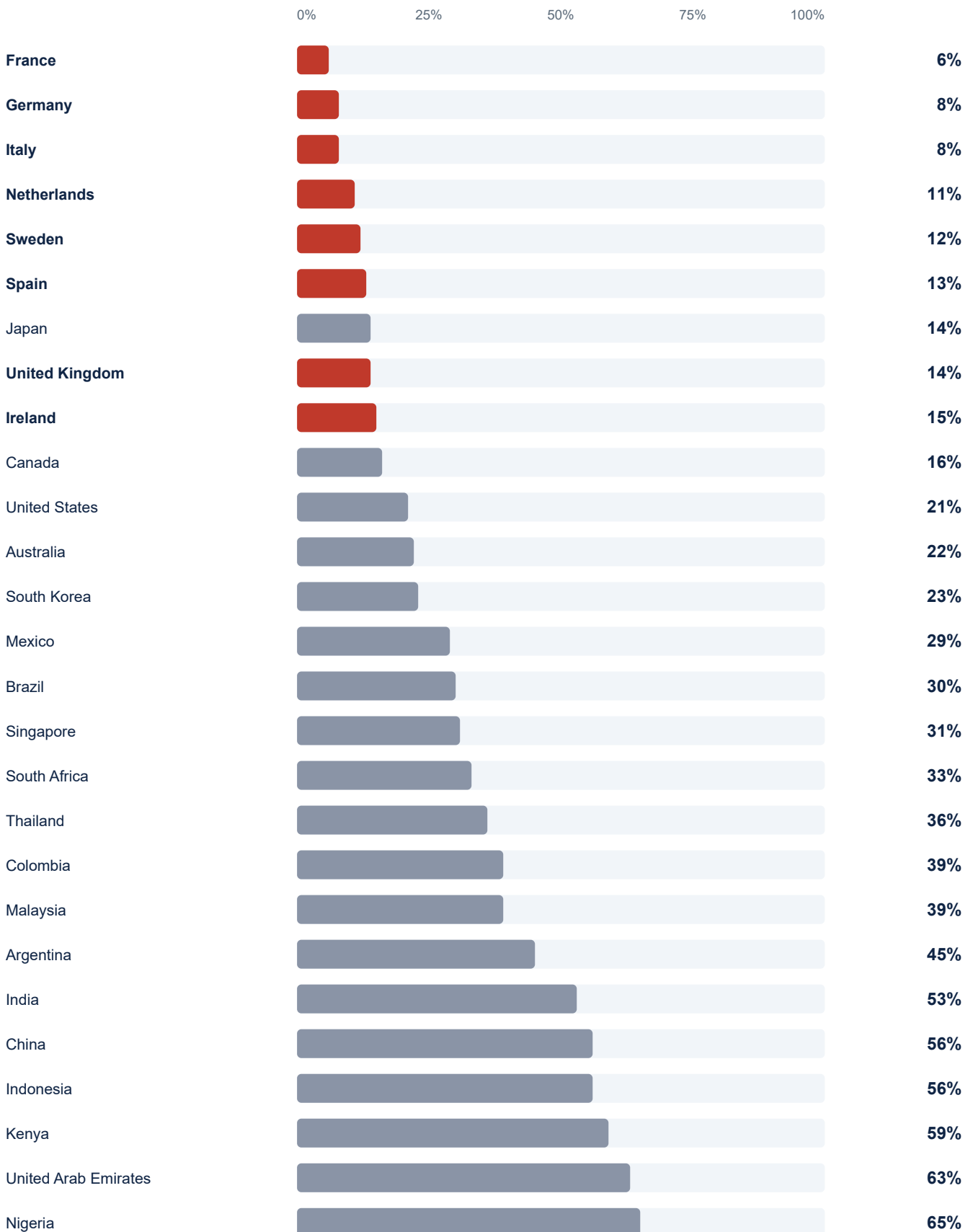
Polling Europe Survey. Index = % good opinions minus % bad opinions.

Public optimism

Share agreeing that the next generation will be better off than today.

Edelman Trust Barometer 2026 · Fieldwork: 25 October–16 November 2025

■ European country ■ Rest of the world



Saudi Arabia



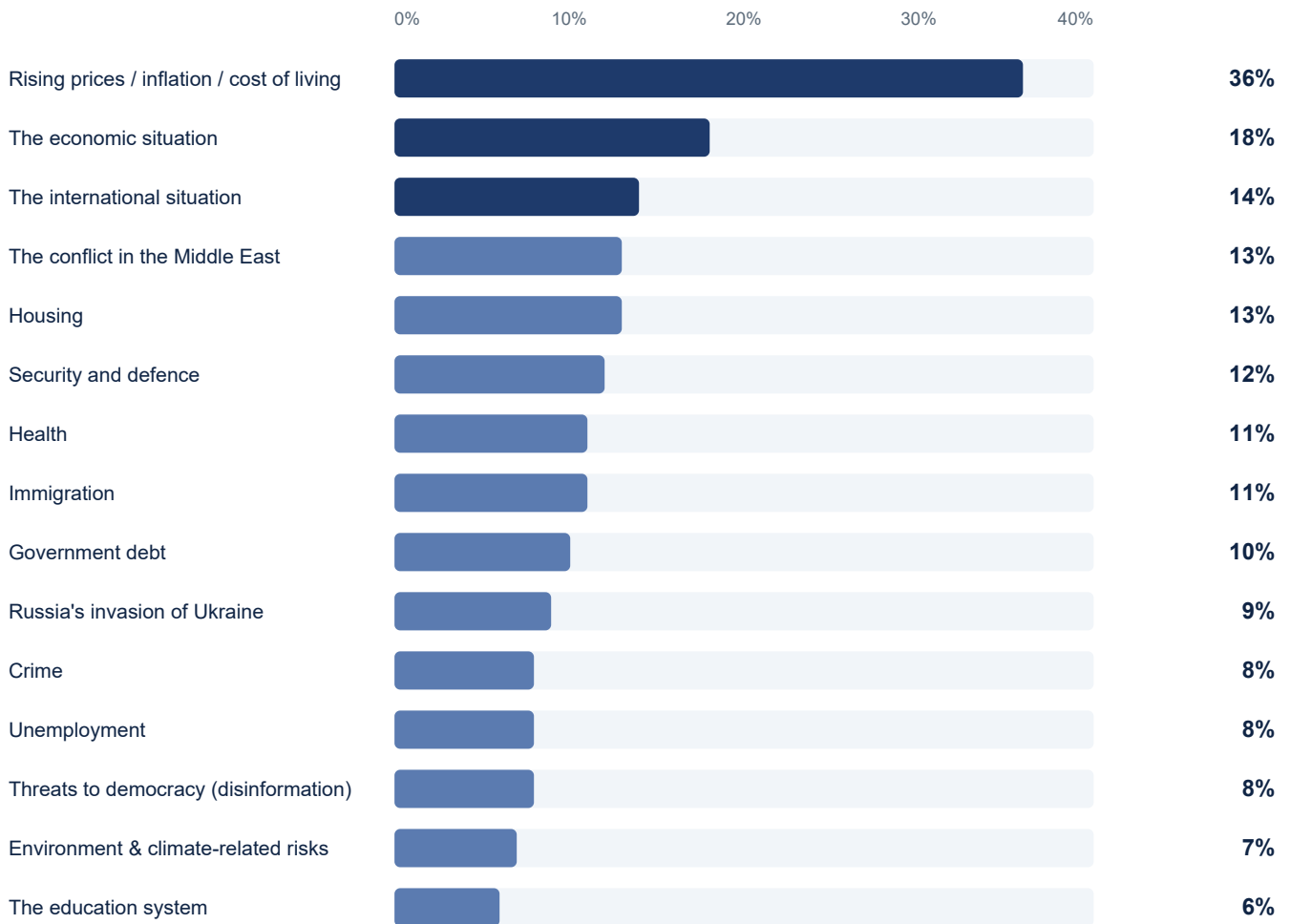
65%

Not all EU countries are covered. Around 575 respondents per country for this question.

Citizens' priorities

EU27 average: share naming each issue among the two most important facing their own country.

Standard Eurobarometer 105, Spring 2026



Multiple answers were possible.

European Parliament projections

Experimental EP 2029 election projection based on national polling.

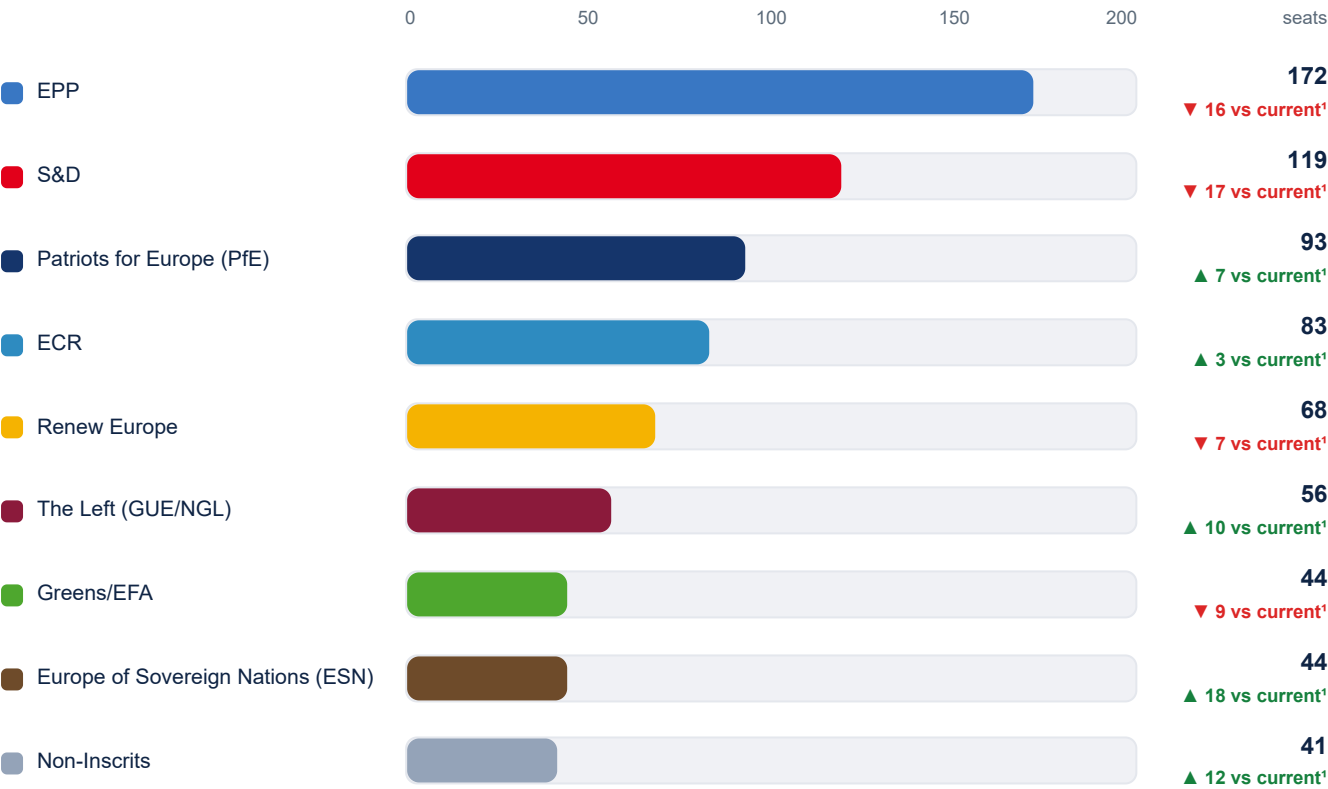
720

seats

361

for an absolute majority

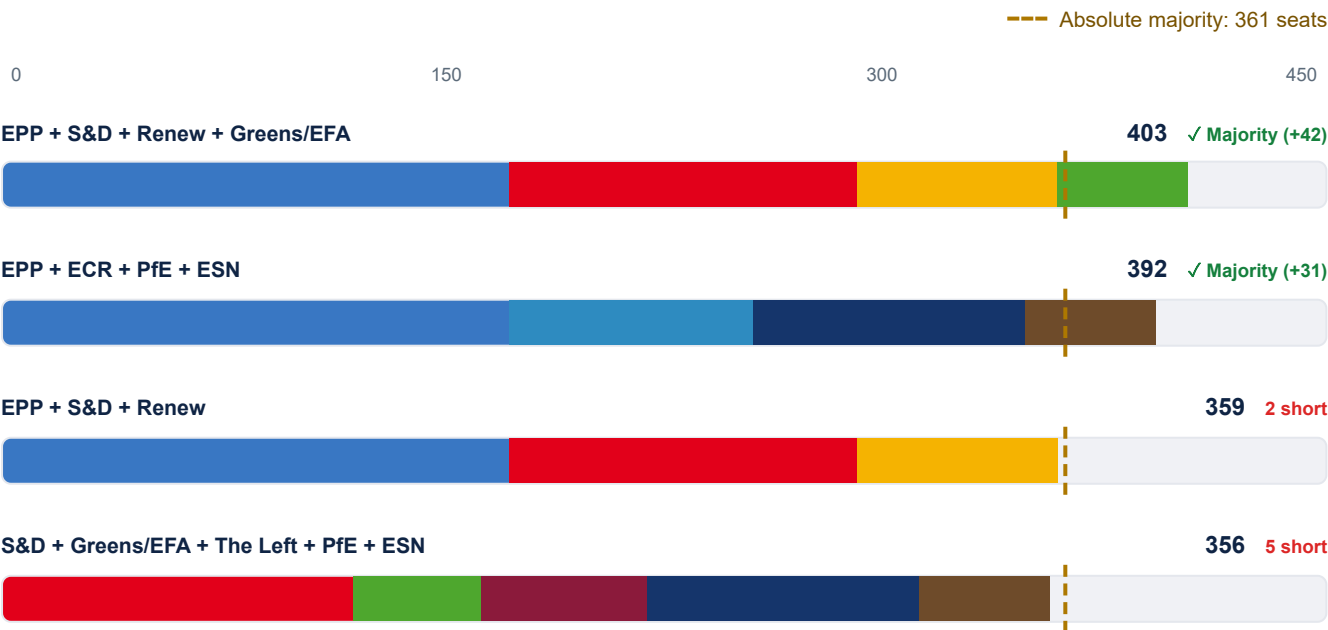
Projected seats by group

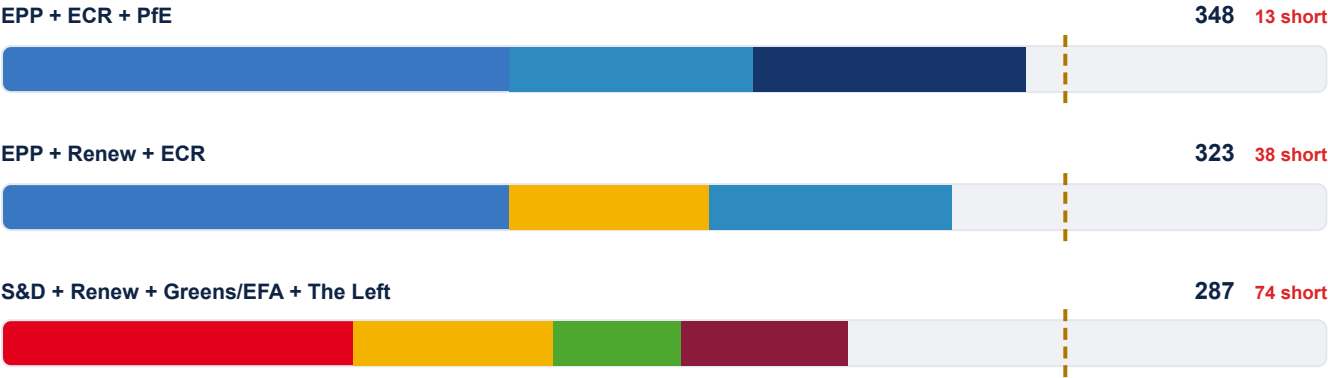


¹ Change against the current Parliament.

Coalition arithmetic

These numerical combinations do not imply coalition agreements.





Positive margins show seats above the 361-seat threshold. Polling averages use an adaptive 21–120-day window; seats are allocated using each country's electoral rules.