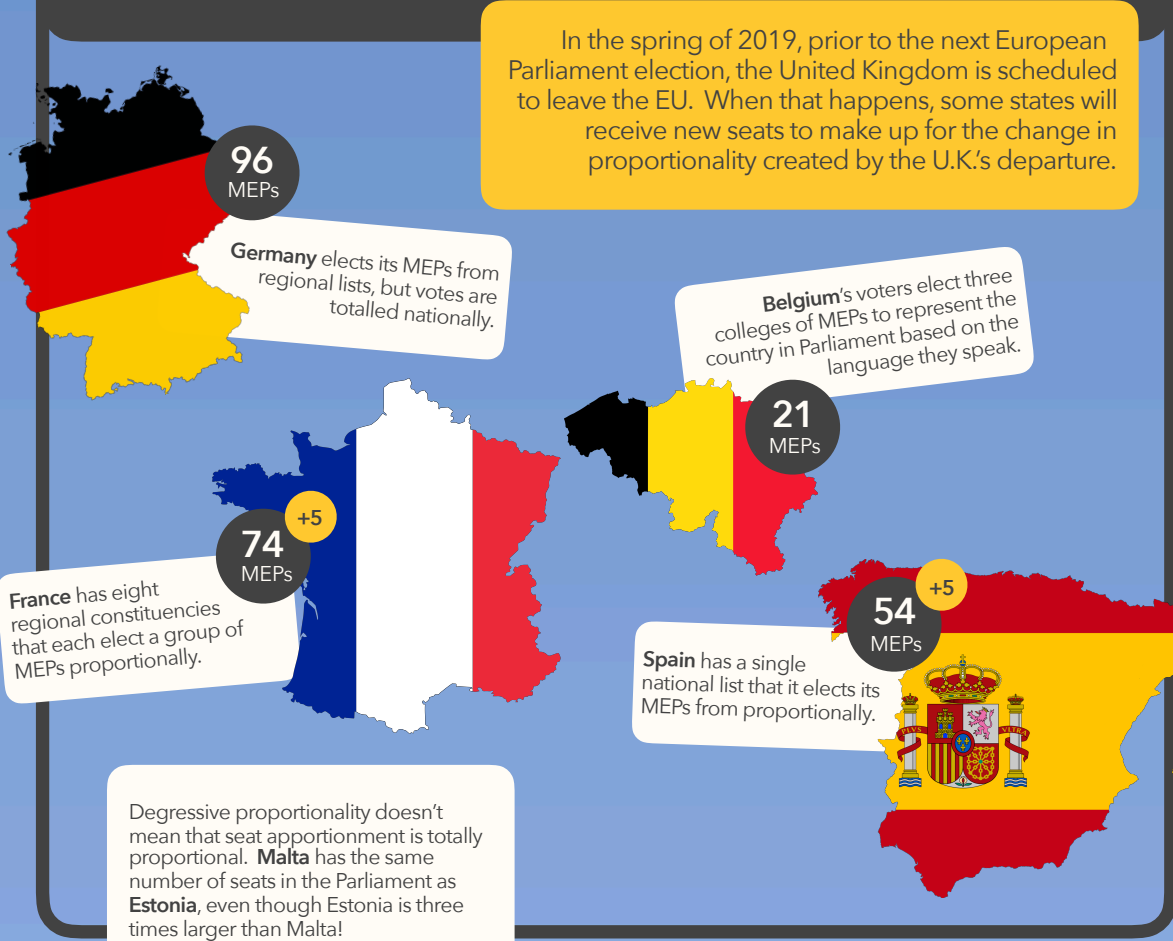


Each of the EU's member states are allocated seats in the European Parliament based on **degressive proportionality**, meaning that smaller countries are intentionally over-represented compared to the largest ones.

Member states are allowed to set their own rules for how their own MEPs are elected, but they are required to use some form of **proportional representation** in their election.



The European Parliament

Benson Cook & Miles Gilbert
Poli451 – The European Union

The **European Parliament**, headquartered in Strasbourg and Brussels, with additional offices in Luxembourg, is one of the most important organs of the European Union and one of the largest democratically elected parliaments in the world. The 28 EU member states and their over 512 million citizens are represented by **750 members** of European Parliament.

Despite technically having more power than the European Commission and sharing responsibility of the budget with the former, its members of parliament are unable to propose legislation but decide on behalf of EU citizens whether proposed legislation is to be accepted or rejected. In recent years, the EU parliament has passed a number of initiatives that have greatly benefited its electorate, such as the **elimination of roaming fees**, as well as the creation of the **Single European Payments Area (SEPA)**.



Elections to the European Parliament are held in **late May** every five years, but different member states hold their elections on different dates. Some, like the Czech Republic, allow citizens two days to vote. Others, such as France, hold elections at different times in different regions, with elections in the country's overseas departments held a day early.

Even if their country's voting age is higher, any EU citizen in **Austria** can vote at 16.

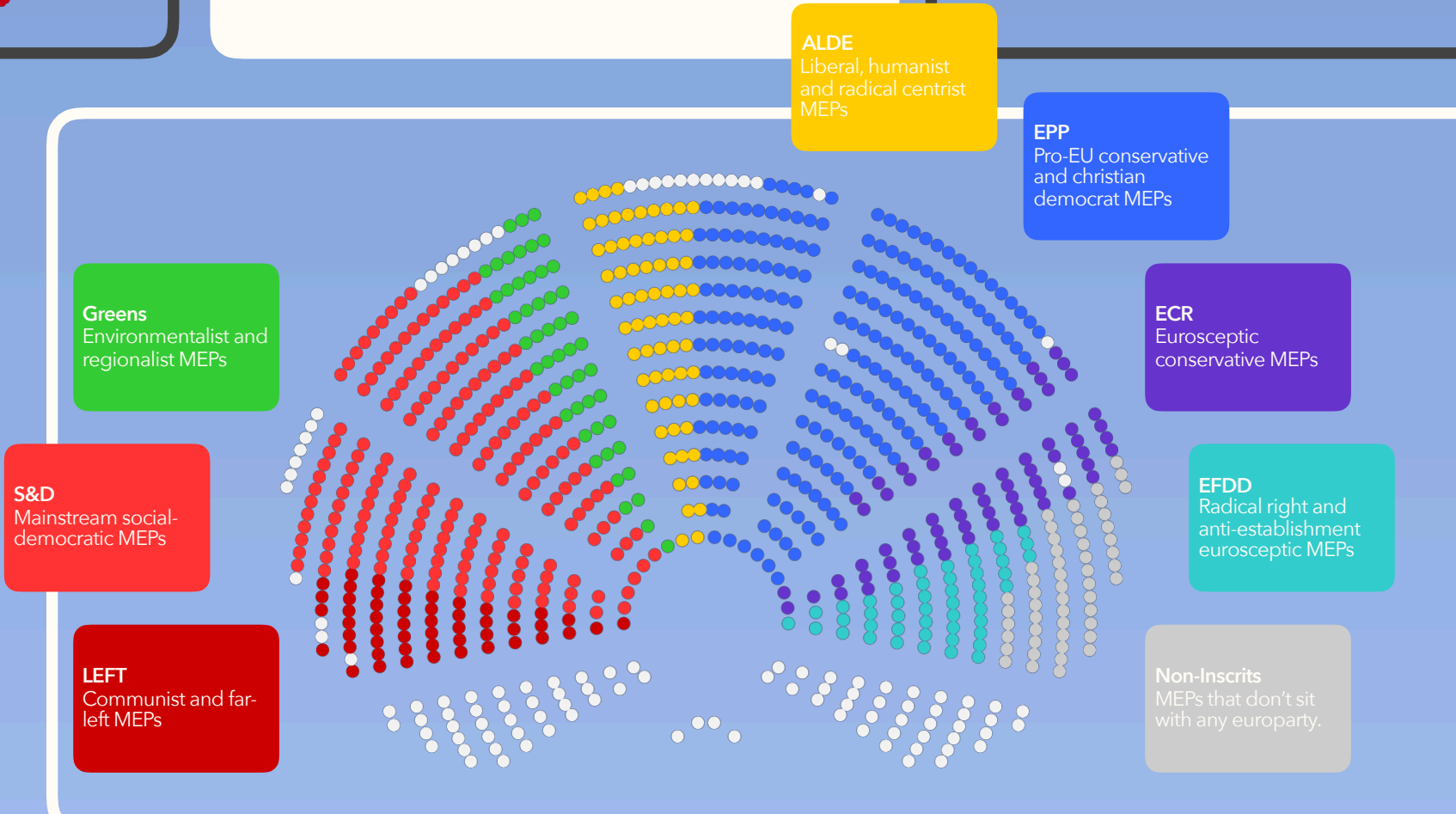
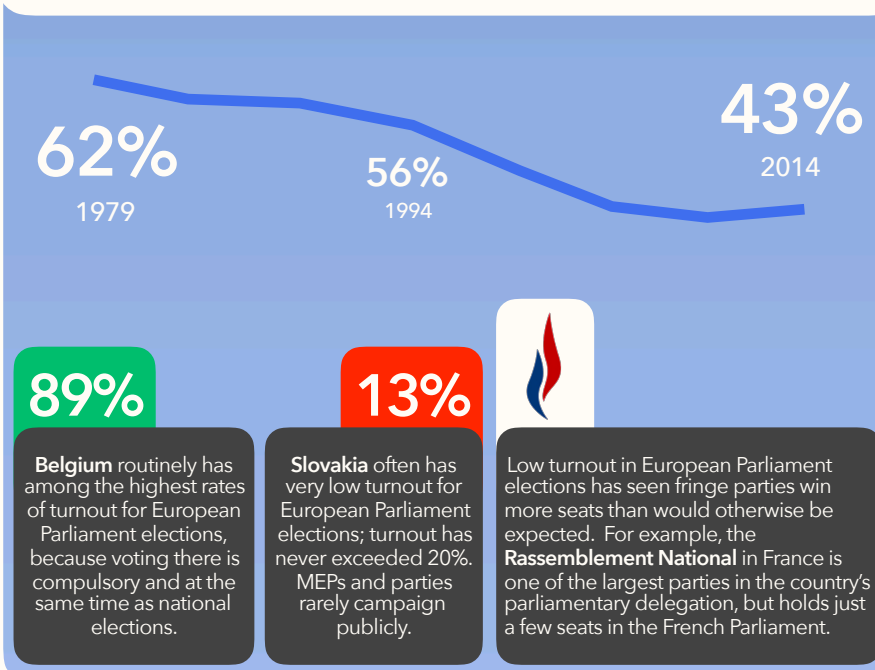
In **France**, citizens over 18 can vote even if they've never lived in France.

In **Romania**, you must be 18 to vote, but 23 to run for the European Parliament.

Since elections to the European Parliament are ultimately conducted by each member state, every state maintains **different eligibility requirements** for people to cast a vote or stand for election.

For instance, European voters can't always vote in another member state, even if that's where they live.

The first European Parliament elections were held in 1979, but in elections since then, EU-wide **turnout** has fallen, and turnout varies wildly among the different member-states.



Though MEPs are elected under the banners of their own national political parties, once they sit in the European Parliament they sit with a europarty's group in the hemicycle.

For example:
 a German MEP from the **CDU** would sit with the **European People's Party**.
 a Belgian MEP from the **MR** would sit with the **Alliance of Liberals & Democrats**.
 a Polish MEP from the **PiS** would sit with the **European Conservatives & Reformists**.
 a Dutch MEP from the **pvdA** would sit with the **European Socialists & Democrats**.

Though it is a partisan chamber, the European Parliament tends to gravitate towards consensus-driven politics, and it is not uncommon for multiple parties to work together in support of a proposed bill.