

Composition of the European Parliament

The European Parliament is due to give its consent to a decision of the European Council establishing the composition of the European Parliament for the next legislature with a vote in plenary in June. The decision aims to adjust the current distribution of seats among Member States and to redistribute some of the seats that would become vacant after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Background

The Lisbon Treaty mandates the Parliament to propose to the European Council a decision on the composition of the EP respecting three principles: a maximum number of 751 MEPs, distributed following degressive proportionality, with a minimum of six seats per Member State and a maximum of 96. The current composition is established by a [2013 European Council Decision](#), as proposed by Parliament, which also defines the notion of 'degressive proportionality'. This notion means that, before rounding up to whole numbers, each Member from a more populous Member State represents more citizens than each Member from a less populous Member State and, conversely, that no less populous Member State has more seats than a more populous Member State. The current distribution of seats does not comply in all cases with the first requirement. A new (permanent) allocation model has, however, proven to be difficult to establish, compounded by uncertainty over the date of the UK's withdrawal from the EU (Brexit), although it is expected to take effect as of 30 March 2019, i.e. before the 2019 European elections. Moreover, most [mathematical formulae](#) lead to a loss of seats by middle-sized Member States, which has prompted some to demand a re-adjustment of the Council voting rules too.

The European Parliament's proposal

The Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) Committee adopted a [report](#) in January 2018, proposing a revised distribution of seats for the next parliamentary term. The report acknowledged that it was not feasible to reach an agreement on a permanent system for allocation of seats, because legal constraints in some Member States would require that process to be finalised by summer 2018 (far ahead of certainty on Brexit). A permanent seat distribution would also require a review of the voting system in Council, involving a Treaty change. The report therefore sought to 'correct', for the 2019 elections, the existing flawed application of degressive proportionality, aligning it with Article 14 TEU by re-distributing, among some Member States, some of the seats to become vacant after Brexit. This partial re-distribution would cause no loss of seats for any Member State and would take into account recent demographic shifts. Of the 73 UK seats, 27 would be re-distributed among some Member States, while the remaining 46 seats would be available for a possible joint constituency based on transnational lists in future elections. The report therefore proposed to reduce the number of seats from 751 to 705. (See map in annex.)

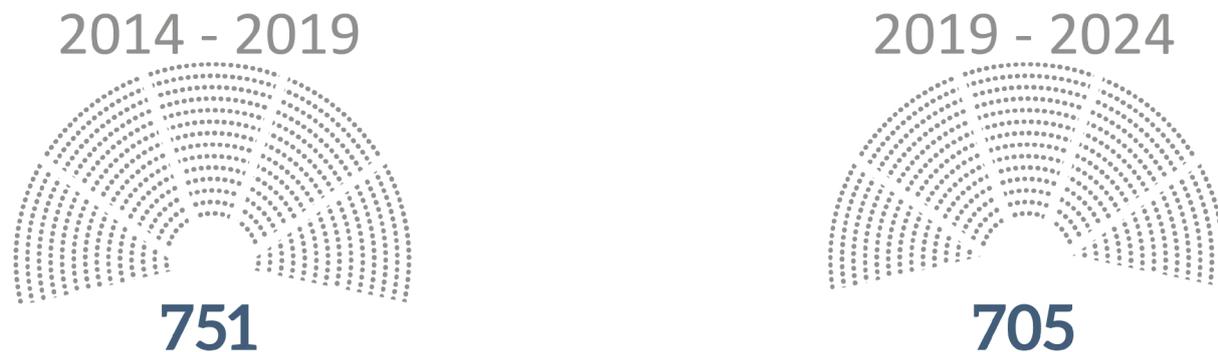
The report was adopted by Parliament in plenary on [7 February 2018](#). Parliament rejected all reference to transnational lists, which could have opened the possibility of creating a European constituency, but approved the reduction, once the UK has left, of the number of seats for the 2019-2024 legislature (from 751 to 705) with no loss of seats for any country. The re-allocation of the 27 UK vacant seats, ensuring degressive proportionality, was also adopted with the remaining 46 seats available for future enlargements.

Next steps

Parliament's proposal was taken over by the European Council, which is expected to adopt a decision, acting unanimously (Article 14(2) TEU), at its meeting of 28-29 June 2018. Before that, Parliament must give its consent, as required by Rule 99. The AFCO committee is due to vote on 10 June on its [recommendation](#) on whether to give consent, with a subsequent vote by Parliament during June's plenary session.

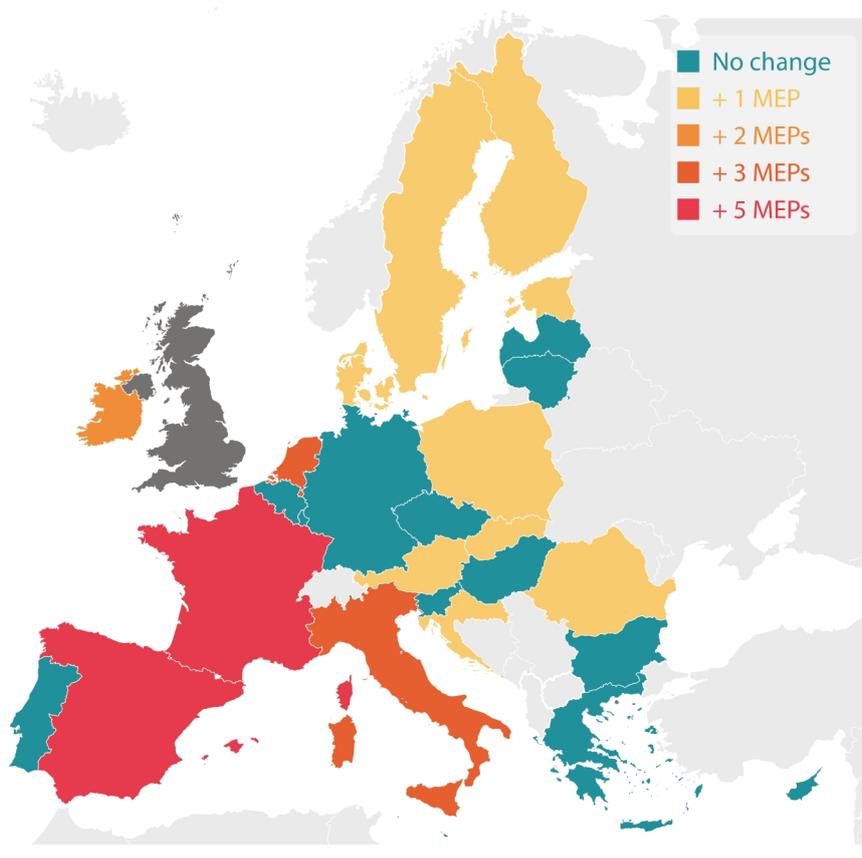
Recommendation for consent: [2017/0900\(NLE\)](#); Committee responsible: AFCO; Rapporteurs: Danuta Maria Hübner (EPP, Poland); Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D, Portugal).

Annex: Redistribution of seats for the 2019-2024 term, after the UK's withdrawal



DE	96
FR	74
IT	73
UK	73
ES	54
PL	51
RO	32
NL	26
BE	21
CZ	21
EL	21
HU	21
PT	21
SE	20
AT	18
BG	17
DK	13
SK	13
FI	13
IE	11
HR	11
LT	11
LV	8
SI	8
EE	6
CY	6
LU	6
MT	6

27
SEATS REDISTRIBUTED AMONG 14 MEMBER STATES



46
SEATS RESERVED FOR POSSIBLE TRANSNATIONAL CONSTITUENCY AND/OR FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE EU ENLARGEMENT

96	DE
79	FR
76	IT
-	UK
59	ES
52	PL
33	RO
29	NL
21	BE
21	CZ
21	EL
21	HU
21	PT
21	SE
19	AT
17	BG
14	DK
14	SK
14	FI
13	IE
12	HR
11	LT
8	LV
8	SI
7	EE
6	CY
6	LU
6	MT

This is an updated version of an *'At a glance'* note published in February 2018.

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