



REPORT - JULY 2011

Voting in the 2009-2014 European Parliament: Who Holds the Power?

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Introduction

Welcome to the six-monthly VoteWatch.eu report. This report examines the voting behaviour of MEPs in the first half of 2011, as well as the voting behaviour of political groups, and national parties within those political groups, since the beginning of the current parliamentary term.

The report uses voting data up to and including the 6-9 June 2011 plenary session. A total of 1,896 recorded ('roll-call') votes were cast since the beginning of the current parliamentary term in July 2009 (including 545 votes since 1 January 2011), and all are included in the statistics presented here. The report focuses on two main questions:

- What is the balance of power between the European political groups?
- What is the balance of power between national party delegations within the largest political groups (EPP, S&D, ALDE)?

This report is based on roll call votes only. Most votes in the European Parliament are taken by a show of hands, sometimes with the help of an electronic check. While the overall result of these votes is recorded in the Parliament's minutes, the individual votes of MEPs are not. VoteWatch.eu has long argued that the European Parliament should conduct more of its votes by roll call, to allow citizens to get a better understanding of the way MEPs exercise their democratic mandate. We are particularly concerned, therefore, about proposals currently being considered by the Parliament that would make it more difficult for MEPs to request a roll call vote.

More detailed information is available on www.VoteWatch.eu

Main findings

- The ALDE group is still on the winning side in votes in the Parliament more than any other political group – however, the EPP is catching up thanks to increasing internal voting discipline.
- The largest national party delegations in the EPP are generally positioned in the political centre of their group, but MEPs from the French UMP and Italian PdL are slightly to the left of their colleagues. The German CDU holds the balance of power in the group, while the Hungarian Fidesz is the party that votes against the group line most often.
- The ideological positions of the national party delegations in the S&D group range from the French PS on the left to the British Labour Party on the right. The German SPD holds the balance of power, while UK MEPs are most likely to vote against the group line.
- In the ALDE group, the French MD and Italian IdV are furthest to the left, while the German FDP is the furthest to the right. The balance of power within ALDE seems to be held by two rather centrally-positioned smaller parties, the Romanian PNL and Belgian VLD. The French MD is the party that is most likely to vote against the group line.
- Over the last six months, increasing left-right competition has become noticeable on *civil liberties, justice and home affairs, economic and monetary affairs, industry, research and energy and international trade issues*.

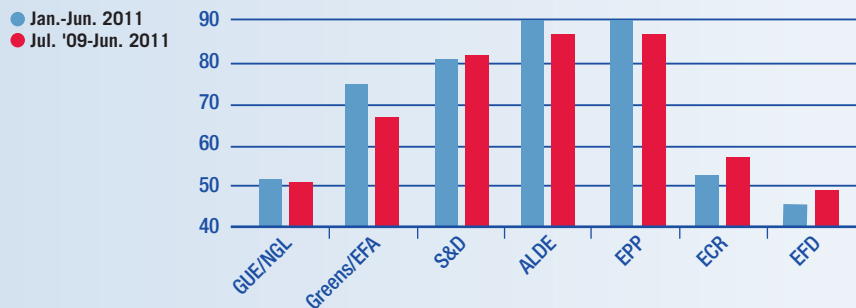
Votewatch.eu is an independent organisation set up to promote better debates and greater transparency in EU decision-making by providing easy access to, and analysis of, the decisions and activities of the EU institutions. VoteWatch.eu uses the European Parliament's own attendance, voting and activity data to give a full overview of MEP activities, broken down by nationality, national party and European party grouping.

Part I: How powerful are the European political groups?

During the first two years of the current term of the European Parliament, the ALDE group has won more votes (voting 'yes' if the majority of the Parliament voted 'yes', or 'no' if the majority voted 'no') than any other political group, closely followed by the EPP. However, if we look at developments in the last six months, we see that these two groups were on the winning side in the same number of votes (see Figure 1). In the period from January to June 2011, both the EPP and ALDE were on the winning side in 90% of votes, followed by the S&D group (86%).

Figure 1: European political groups on the winning side (%)

European political groups on the winning side (%)



What are the latest developments?

The largest European political group, the EPP, has proved better at mobilising its members in the second year of the parliamentary term, and as a result has won more votes than it did in the first year. Interestingly, the EPP has started to increase its winning rate in one of the policy areas in which had previously performed rather poorly: *civil liberties, justice and home affairs*.

Over the last six months, the EPP has won more votes than either the S&D or ALDE. This was due, firstly, to high attendance and internal cohesion rates in the EPP and, secondly, because ALDE voted with the EPP (thereby securing a majority) rather than with the S&D on three important dossiers: the Granting and withdrawing international protection [of refugees], the Single application procedure for residence and work, and the EU strategy on Roma inclusion. In the 31 roll-call votes on these three dossiers, the EPP was on the winning side in 87% of votes, ALDE in 83%, and the S&D in only 55%.

Conversely, on *economic and monetary affairs*, the last six months saw the EPP losing its first votes in this policy area. Undefeated until the start of 2011, the EPP went on to lose a series of battles on two non-legislative dossiers: the reports on Innovative Financing (Financial Transaction Tax) and on Rising food prices. On both occasions, the S&D claimed victory due to internal divisions within the EPP.

In the last six months, the ECR group won the highest proportion of the time (95%) on the 21 votes on four dossiers in the field of *industry, research and energy*: Radio Spectrum Policy, Lessons to be drawn for nuclear safety from the accident at Fukushima, European Network and Information Security Agency, and Radioactive contamination of foodstuffs.

Meanwhile, on international trade, the coalition of the centre-right (EPP+ALDE+ECR) consolidated its dominant position significantly, defeating the centre-left in most votes on the key dossiers over the last six months on issues such as the EU-India free trade agreement, Trade preferences for Pakistan, Agreement on trade in bananas and Bilateral Investment Treaties.

For a full overview of European political groups' performances, broken down by time interval and policy area, visit our specific section: votewatch.eu/cx_epg_coalitions.php

Part II: Which national party delegations make the running within the European political groups?

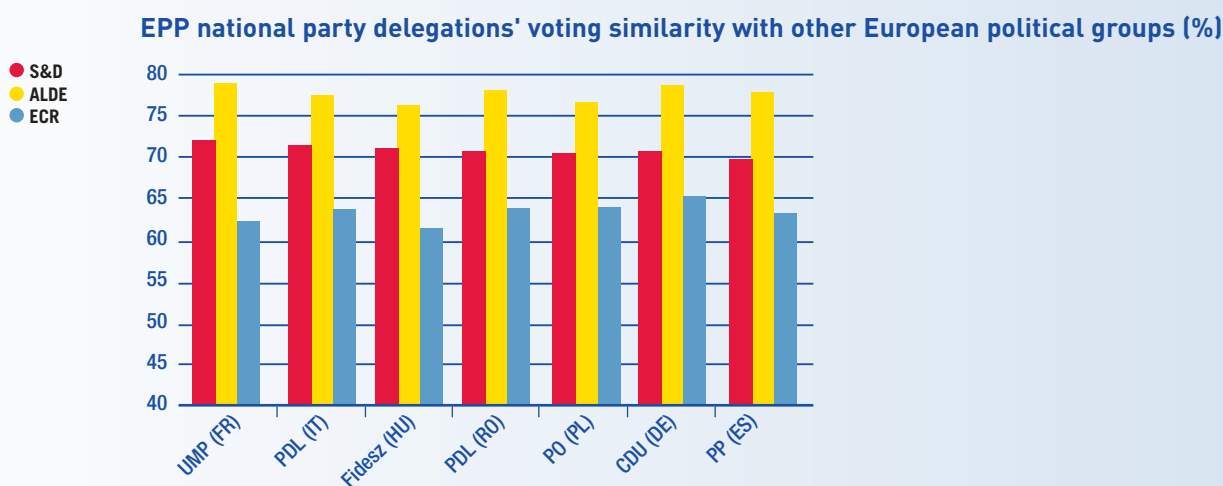
1. Balance of power in the EPP

The EPP is the largest group in the European Parliament, with 265 MEPs. The largest national party delegations are the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU, Germany, with 34 MEPs), Il Popolo della Liberta (PdL, Italy, 26), Platforma Obywatelska (PO, Poland, 25), Partido Popular (PP, Spain, 23), Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP, France, 21), Fidesz (Hungary, 14), and Partidul Democrat Liberal (PDL, Romania, 11).

What are the internal factions?

To determine the ideological positions of national parties within a European political group on a left- right axis, we look at the extent to which the national party delegations match the positions of the other key political groups in votes in the Parliament. **Figure 2** shows that for all the large delegations in the EPP, the ALDE group has been the preferred coalition partner. Secondly, the voting patterns within the EPP show that the French UMP, Italian PdL and Hungarian Fidesz are positioned slightly more to the left, as they match S&D positions somewhat more than the other large EPP member parties. Seen from this perspective, the German CDU is slightly to the right of the group, as it is the national party that matches most closely the ECR policy preferences. However, the differences in the voting patterns of the major national party delegations in the EPP are relatively small, and noticeably smaller than the divisions within the other large political groups.

Figure 2: ideological positions of national party delegations in the EPP group



When looking at the cohesion of the two largest European political groups, we notice that both the EPP and the S&D score 0.93 (on a scale from 0 to 1, with 1 representing total agreement). The explanation for this is that in the EPP the splits have tended to take place on an individual basis, rather than whole national delegations defying the group line. In fact, while in the S&D the average individual MEP's loyalty to his or her national party is 98%, in the EPP this indicator is slightly lower, at 97%¹.

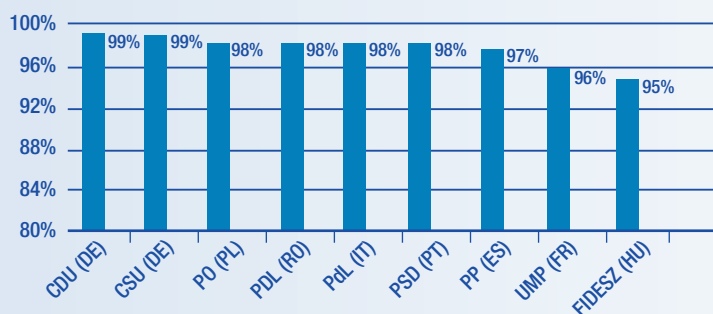
¹To see the level of MEP loyalty to European political group or to national party, visit http://votewatch.eu/cx_national_parties.php

Who holds power and who dissents?

When looking at the overall balance of power within the group, we see that the German CDU has almost always voted the same way as the group majority (in 99% of votes)², followed closely by the Polish PO and the Romanian PDL. Among the seven largest national party delegations in the EPP, the Hungarian Fidesz has voted with the majority least often (95%).

Figure 3: national party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (overall)

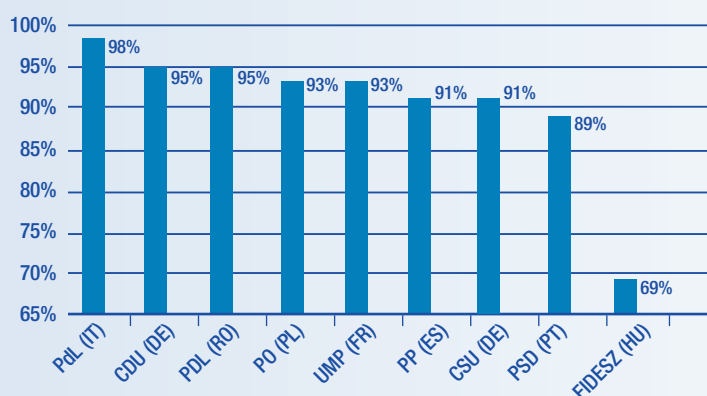
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (overall)



Looking at convergence of opinions in those policy areas that have raised disputes within the group, we see that on *agriculture*, the Hungarian delegation has voted with the rest of the group only 69% of the time, which is far behind the other large delegations:

Figure 4: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (agriculture)

National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (agriculture)

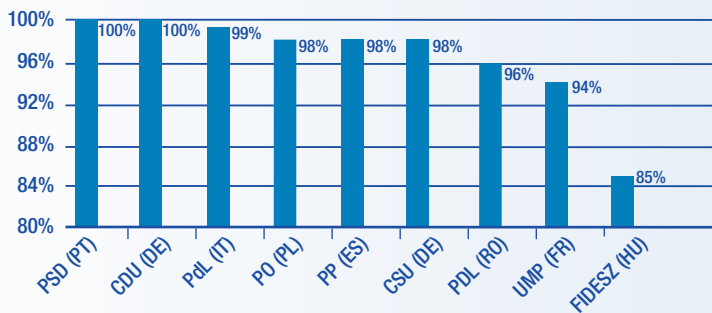


² This indicator shows the extent to which the political line of a national party matches that of the European political group to which it belongs. The political line is determined by the way in which the majority of members of the group voted.

A similar trend can be seen on *environment and public health* issues, where the Hungarian delegation has frequently found itself in a minority within the EPP group:

Figure 5: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (environment and public health)

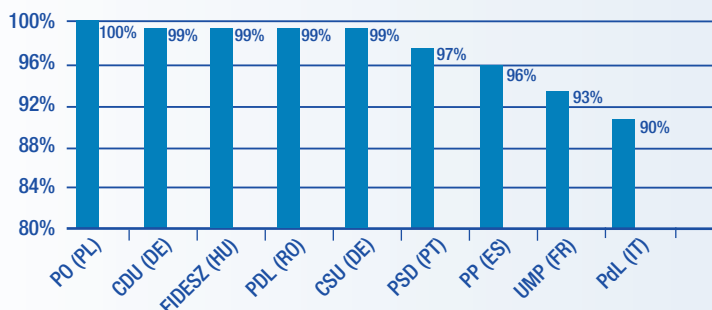
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (environment and public health)



On *gender equality* issues, the French UMP and Italian PdL had a different view to the majority of the EPP in a number of votes, such as the key votes on maternity leave. Similarly, on *employment and social affairs* issues, the Italian, French and Spanish delegations in the EPP have had a slightly different position on several issues:

Figure 6: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (employment and social affairs)

Figure 6: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the EPP group (employment and social affairs)



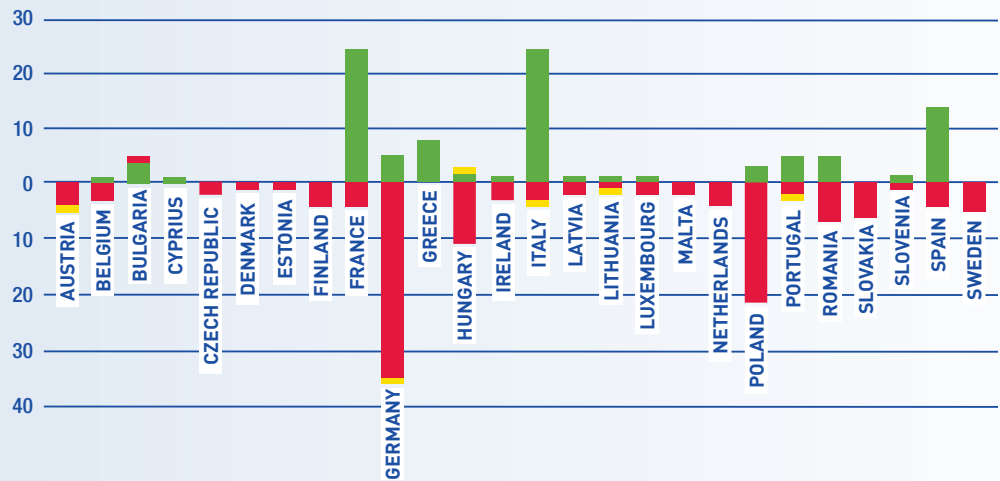
One example of these divisions is the vote on lorry drivers' working time. On 16 June 2010 Parliament rejected the Commission's proposal that self-employed drivers continue to be exempted from the 2002 Working Time Directive on the road transport industry. In this vote, the majority of EPP members voted against the Parliament's resolution to reject the Commission proposal, but almost 40% of the EPP members (mostly from France, Italy, Spain and Portugal) defected from the group majority and voted in favour – thereby supporting restrictions on lorry drivers' working time:

Figure 7: Lorry drivers vote, national splits in the EPP group

Lorry drivers - inclusion in the provisions of the Working Time Directive; Distribution of votes inside the EPP



● For
● Against
● Abstention



For more information on the balance of power and convergence of policy opinions between national party delegations in the European political groups, visit votewatch.eu/cx_national_parties.php

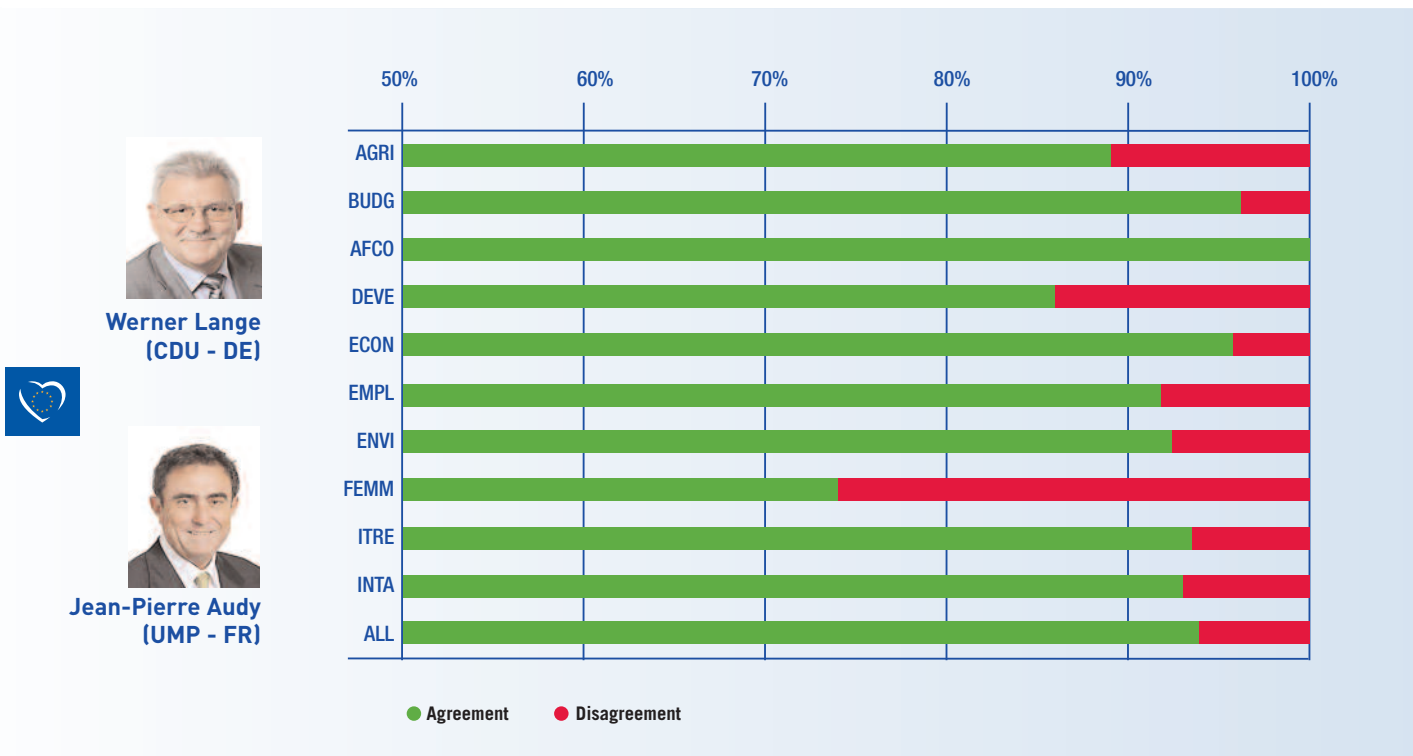
These results are based on the voting behaviour of MEPs across all policy issues, and the patterns of national party behaviour we observe here in this snapshot may vary considerably depending on the issue at stake.

How closely do the national party leaders' votes match?

Another way of looking at internal relations between key national party delegations within a group is to look at the voting behaviour of the national delegation leaders. For example, the main areas of disagreement between the French and the German delegation leaders in the EPP have been agriculture, development and gender equality³:

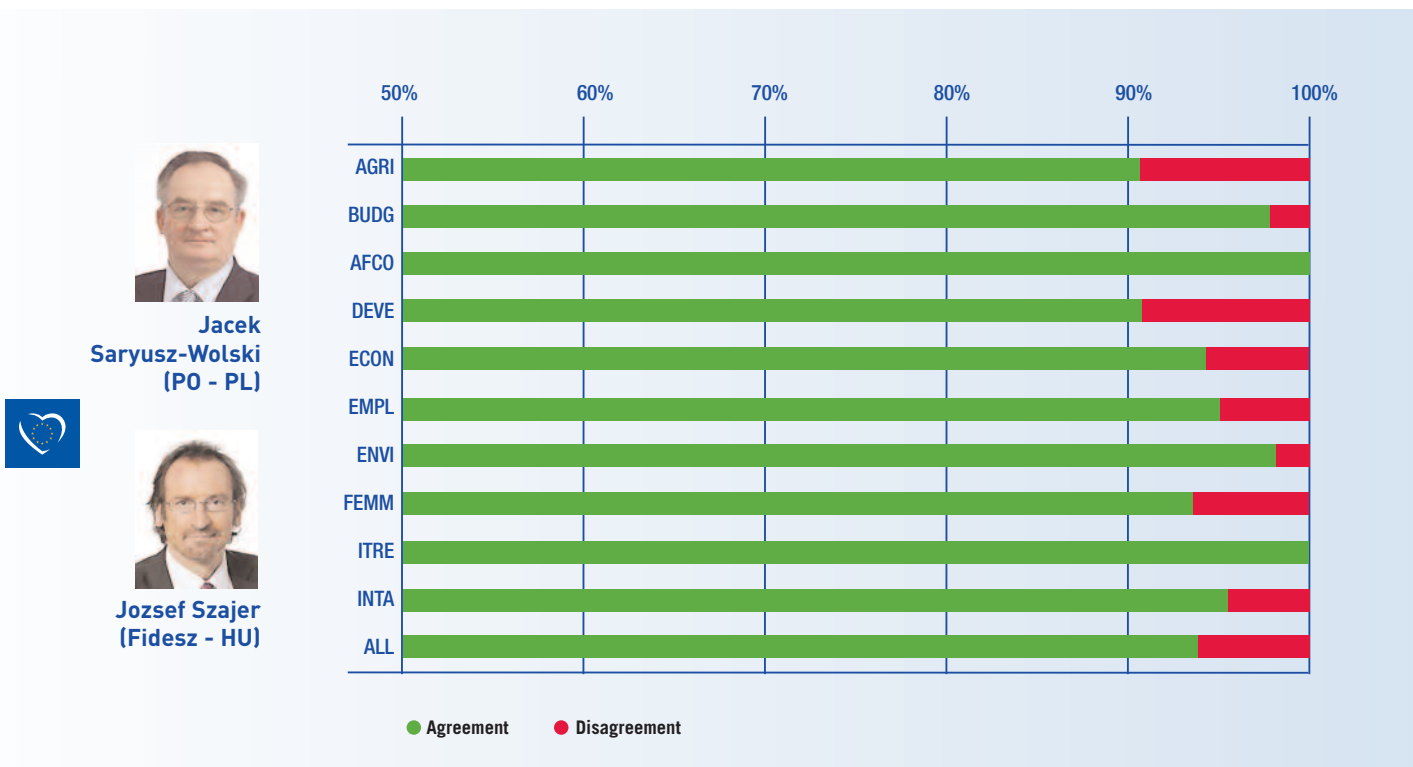
³The graphic presents only a selection of representative policy areas.

Figure 8: Agreement / disagreement rates between Jean-Pierre Audy (UMP) and Werner Lange (CDU)



In the EPP, the highest degree of similarity in voting behaviour between leaders of the largest national party delegations has been between heads of the Polish and the Hungarian delegations:

Figure 9: Agreement / disagreement rates between Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PO) and Jozsef Szajer (Fidesz):



2. Balance of power in the S&D group

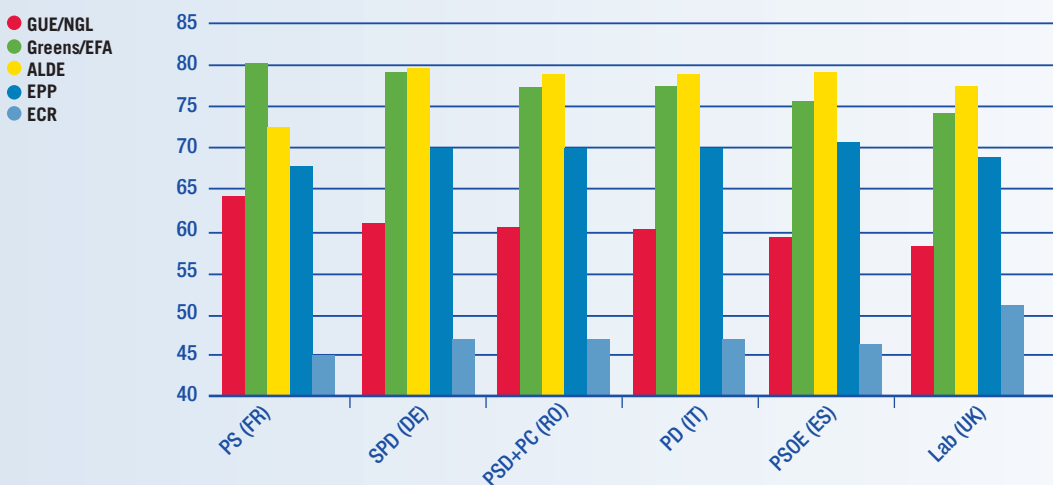
The S&D is the second largest group in the Parliament, with 185 MEPs. The largest national party delegations are the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD, Germany, with 23 MEPs), Partito Democratico (PD, Italy, 21), Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, Spain, 20), Parti Socialiste (PS, France, 14), Labour Party (UK, 13), and Partidul Social Democrat + Partidul Conservator (PSD+PC, Romania, 11).

What are the internal factions?

The ALDE and the Greens/EFA groups are the preferred coalition partners for S&D member parties, but in different proportions. Figure 10 shows that the French PS are furthest to the left in terms of their voting behaviour among the S&D's largest national party delegations. Significantly, the French PS vote more frequently with the Greens/EFA group than with the ALDE group, which is not the case for the other large national party delegations in S&D. The German SPD is also somewhat on the left of the group, while the British Labour Party is clearly on the right of the S&D group.

Figure 10: ideological positions of national party delegations in the S&D group

S&D national party delegations' voting similarity with other European political groups (%)

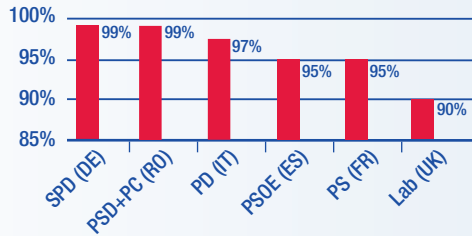


Who holds power and who dissents?

When looking at the overall balance of power within the S&D, we see that the group is dominated by the three largest delegations - the German SPD, Italian PD and Spanish PSOE. Among the top six largest delegations in S&D, the British Labour Party has so far been the least likely to vote with the S&D majority position:

Figure 11: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (overall)

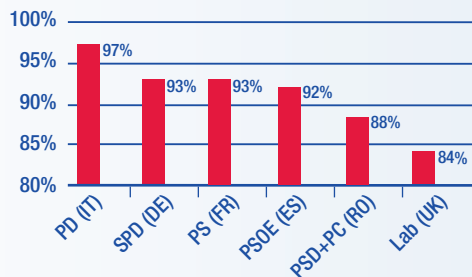
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (overall)



The policy area where the British Labour Party has dissented most so far is *industry, research and energy*, where its loyalty level dips to 83%:

Figure 12: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (industry, research and energy)

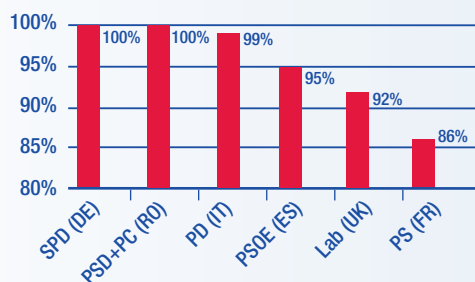
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (industry, research and energy)



Another area where major divisions have emerged within the S&D group is *international trade*. Here, the French PS (on the left) and the British Labour Party (on the right) have found themselves in an opposing minority within the group on a number of occasions:

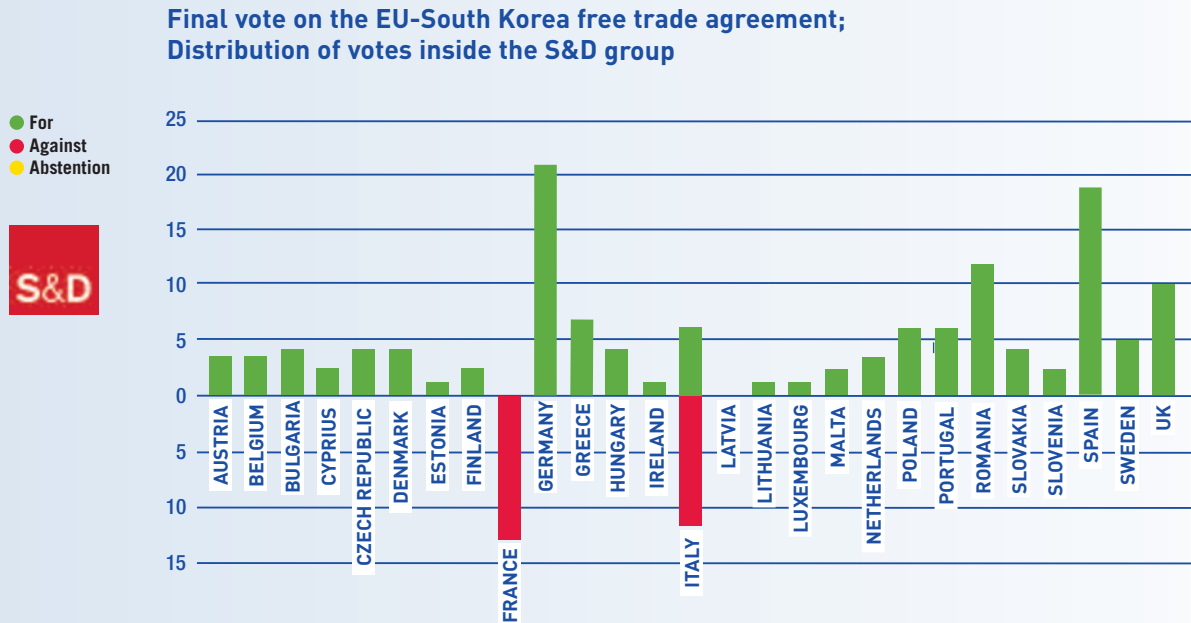
Figure 13: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (international trade)

National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (international trade)



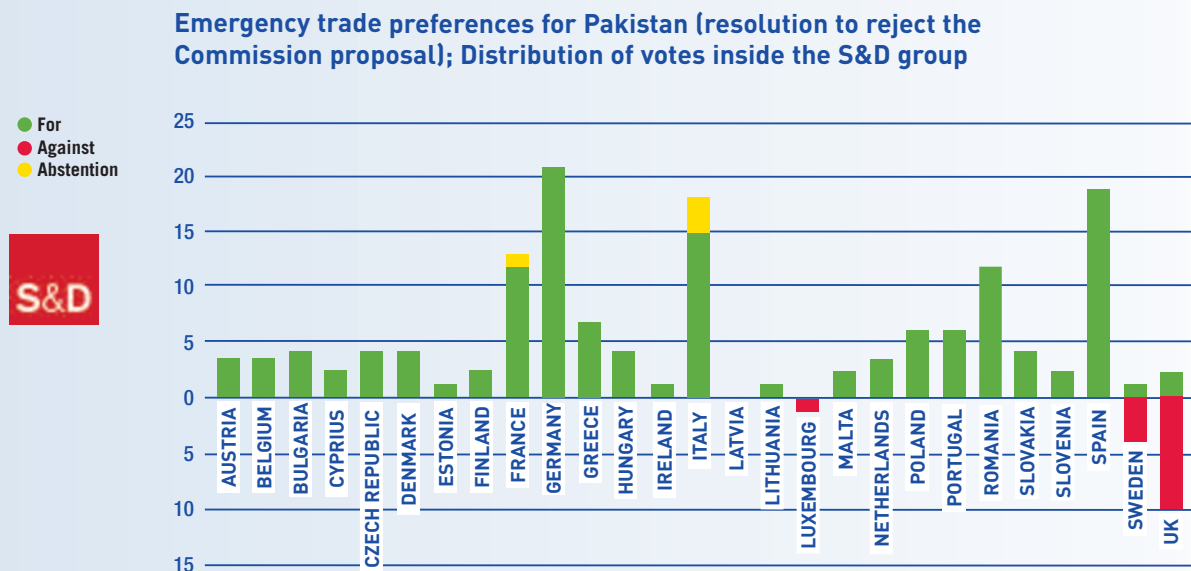
Two examples show the different orientations of the French and British delegations in the S&D group. The first is the vote on the free trade agreement between the EU and South Korea, where the French delegation broke away from the group and voted against.

Figure 14: Final vote on the EU-South Korea free trade agreement - national splits in the S&D group



The second concerns the Commission proposal for Emergency autonomous trade preferences for Pakistan. In a vote to reject the Commission proposal (and therefore the trade preferences) the majority of the S&D group voted in favour (rejecting the trade preferences), but the British Labour Party delegation voted against (along with the Swedish delegation, supporting the trade preferences):

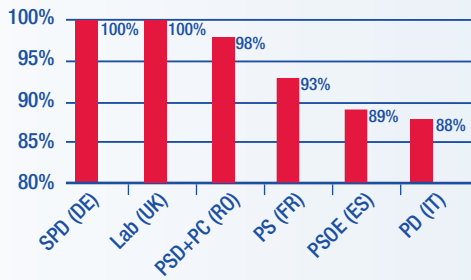
Figure 15: Final vote on Emergency trade preferences for Pakistan, national splits in the S&D group



On *environment and public health* issues, among the largest delegations the Spanish PSOE and Italian PD delegations have been in the minority most often:

Figure 16: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (environment and public health)

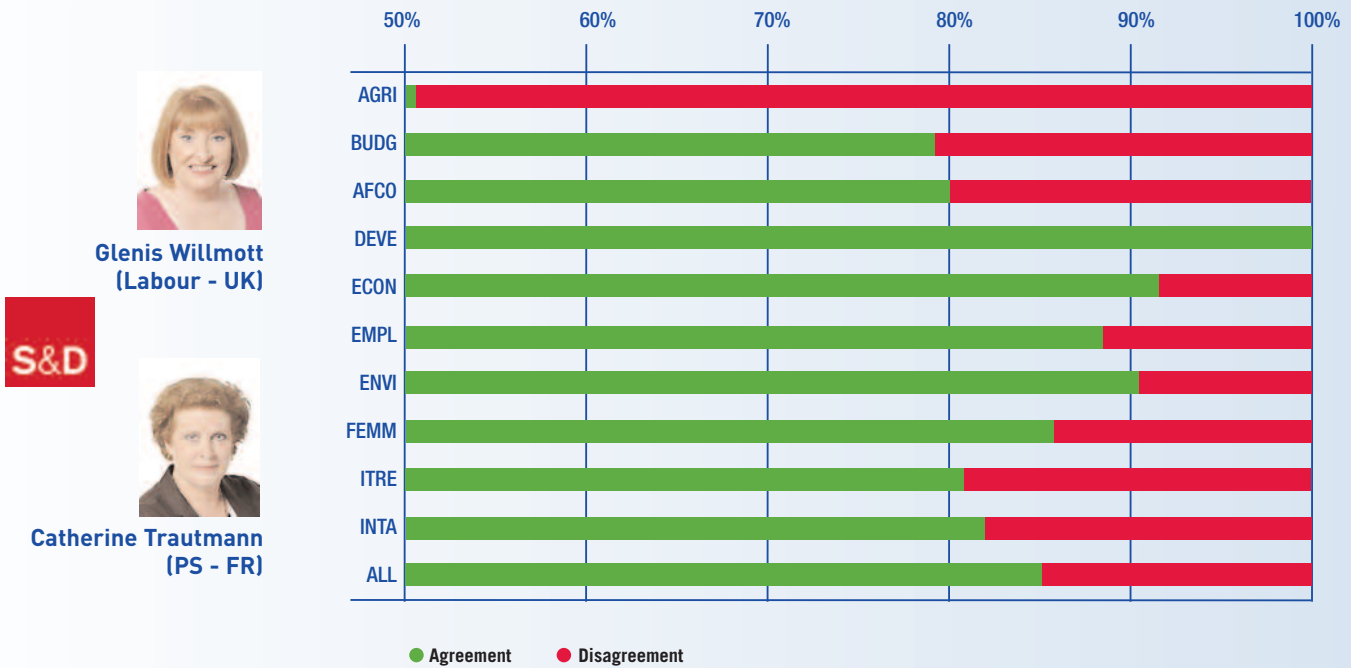
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the S&D group (environment and public health)



How closely do the national party leaders' votes match?

When analysing the voting behaviour of the national delegation leaders in the S&D group, the greatest split has been between the leaders of the French and British delegations:

Figure 17: Agreement / disagreement rates between Glenis Willmott (Labour) and Catherine Trautmann (PS)



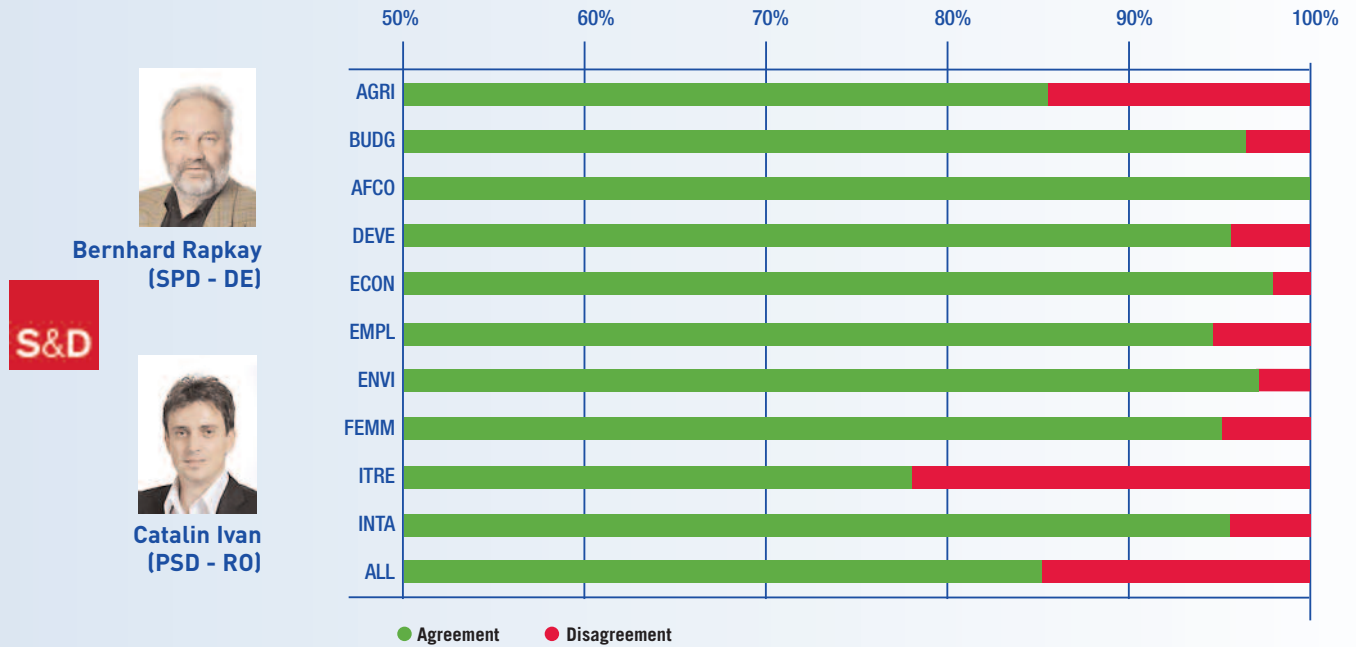
Glenis Willmott (Labour - UK)



Catherine Trautmann (PS - FR)

At the opposite end, the highest degree of agreement has been between the leaders of the German and Romanian delegations:

Figure 18: Agreement / disagreement rates between Bernhard Rapkay (SPD) and Catalin Ivan (PSD)



Bernhard Rapkay (SPD - DE)



Catalin Ivan (PSD - RO)

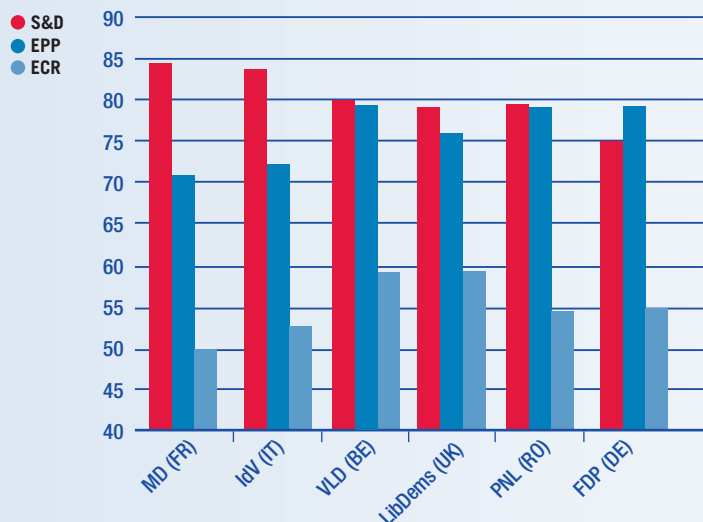
3. Balance of power in the ALDE group

The ALDE group is the third largest group, with 85 MEPs. The largest national party delegations are the Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP, Germany, with 12 MEPs), the Liberal Democrats (LibDems, UK, 12), the Partidul Național Liberal (PNL, Romania, 5), Mouvement Démocrate (MD, France, 5), and Italia dei Valori - Lista Di Pietro (IdV, Italy, 4). We also include in the analysis the party of the leader of the ALDE group, Guy Verhofstadt, the Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (Open-VLD, Belgium, 3).

What are the internal factions?

Figure 19 shows that the French MD and the Italian IdV are visibly to the left in their voting behaviour within the ALDE group, as they clearly prefer the S&D as coalition partner over the EPP. Among the other large national party delegations, the differences are significantly smaller. The German FDP can be looked at as furthest to the right, as it is the only party delegation that prefers the EPP more over the S&D, while the Romanian PNL, the British LibDems and the Belgian Open-VLD are more towards the centre of the group.

Figure 19: ideological positions of national party delegations in the ALDE group

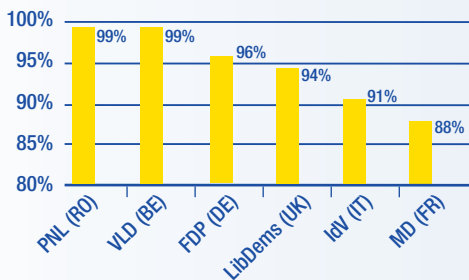


Who holds power and who dissents?

When looking at the size of the national party delegations, we see that the German FDP and British LibDem delegations are dominant. However, when looking at the proportion of times a delegation was in majority within the group, we see that it is the Romanian PNL and Belgian VLD that have so far been in majority the most, while the French MD and Italian IdV have so far been the least likely to vote with the majority.

Figure 20: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (overall)

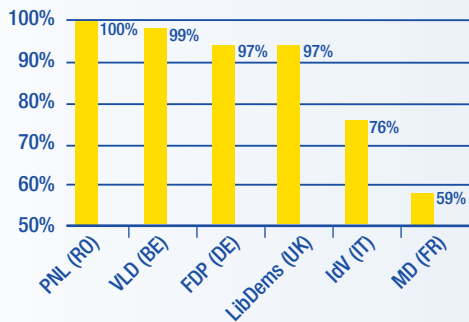
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (overall)



The policy area where the French MD has been most opposed to the ALDE majority is *agriculture*, where its loyalty level dips as low as 59%. Italia dei Valori has also voted differently from the majority of ALDE in one in four votes in this policy area:

Figure 21: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (agriculture)

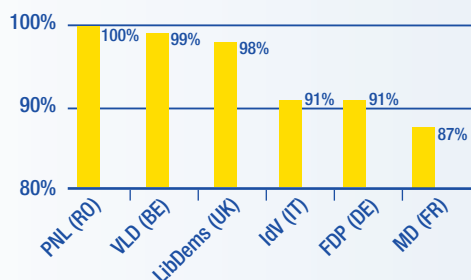
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (agriculture)



On *economic and monetary affairs*, the German FDP delegation, on the one hand, and French MD delegation, on the other, have found themselves in a minority a number of times:

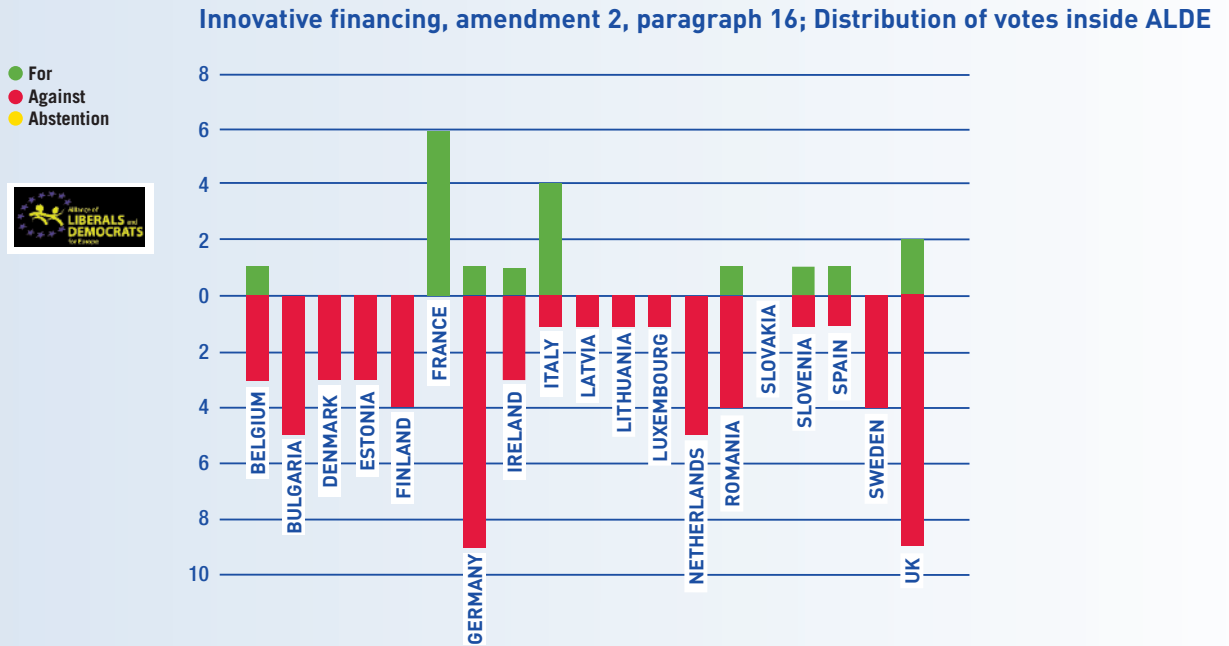
Figure 22: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (economic and monetary affairs)

National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (economic and monetary affairs)



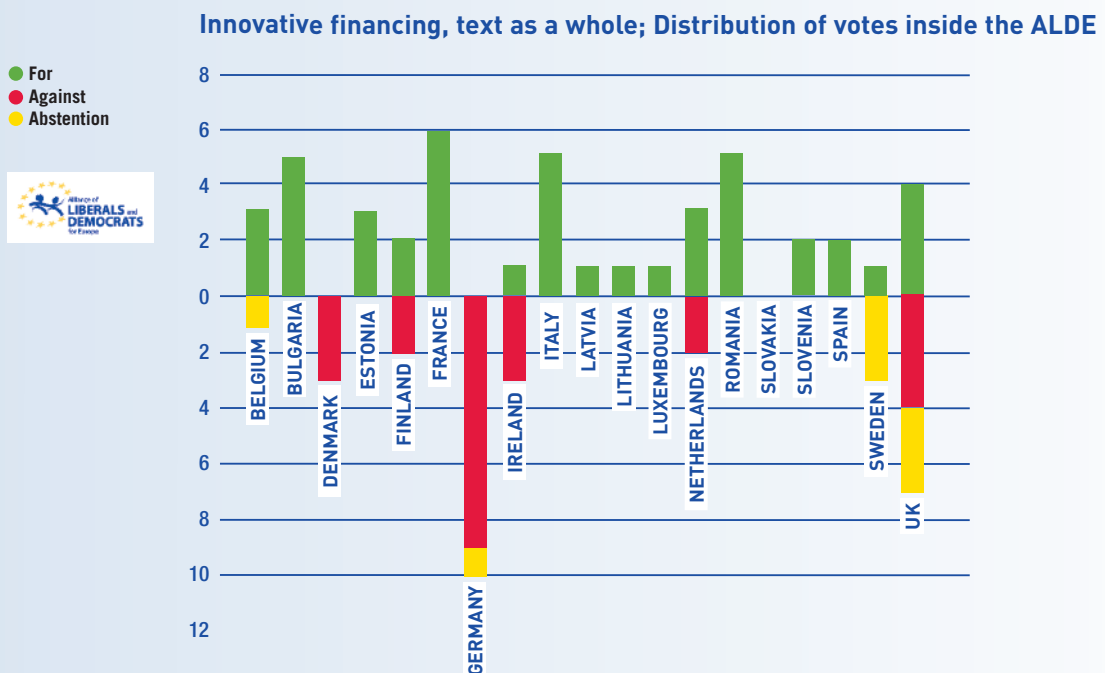
Examples of this trend are two key votes on the resolution calling for a tax on financial transactions (FTT) on 8 March 2011. The first vote was cast on amendment 2 to paragraph 16, which provided that the EU should implement the FTT first at the EU level if a FTT could not be agreed globally. In this vote, the majority of the ALDE group voted against, while the French MD defected from the group majority and voted in favour of unilateral EU introduction of a FTT:

Figure 23: Innovative Financing, amendment 2, paragraph 16 (Financial Transaction Tax), national splits in the ALDE group



However, in the vote on the text of the resolution as a whole, the majority of the ALDE group voted in favour, but the German FDP defected and voted against, showing strong opposition to the FTT, which had been included in the final text:

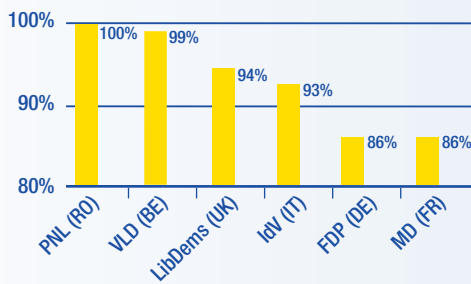
Figure 24: Innovative Financing, final vote, national splits in the ALDE group



The German FDP has also been in a minority within ALDE on some issues concerning *environment and public health*:

Figure 25: National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (environment and public health)

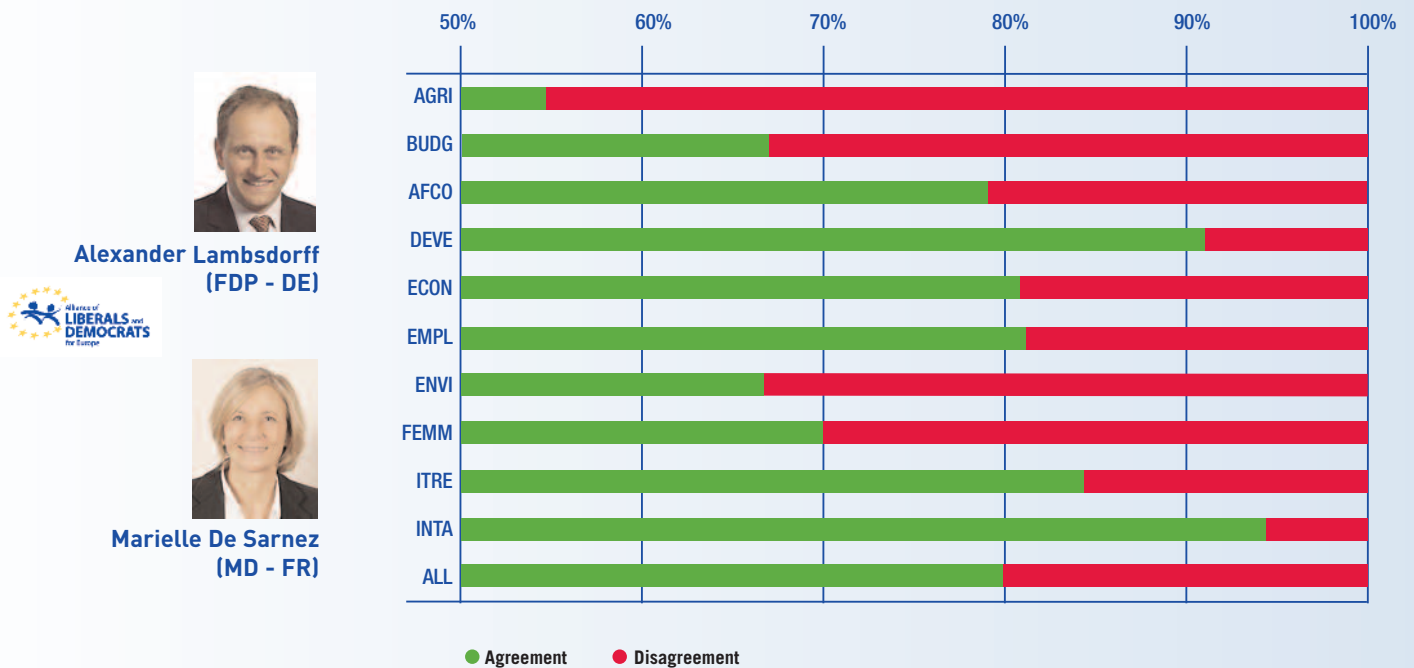
National party delegations forming part of the majority within the ALDE group (environment and public health)



How closely do the national party leaders' votes match?

When analysing the voting behaviour of leaders of national delegations in ALDE, the greatest split has been between the leaders of the German and French delegations:

Figure 26: agreement / disagreement rates between Alexander Lambsdorff (FDP) and Marielle De Sarnez (MD)



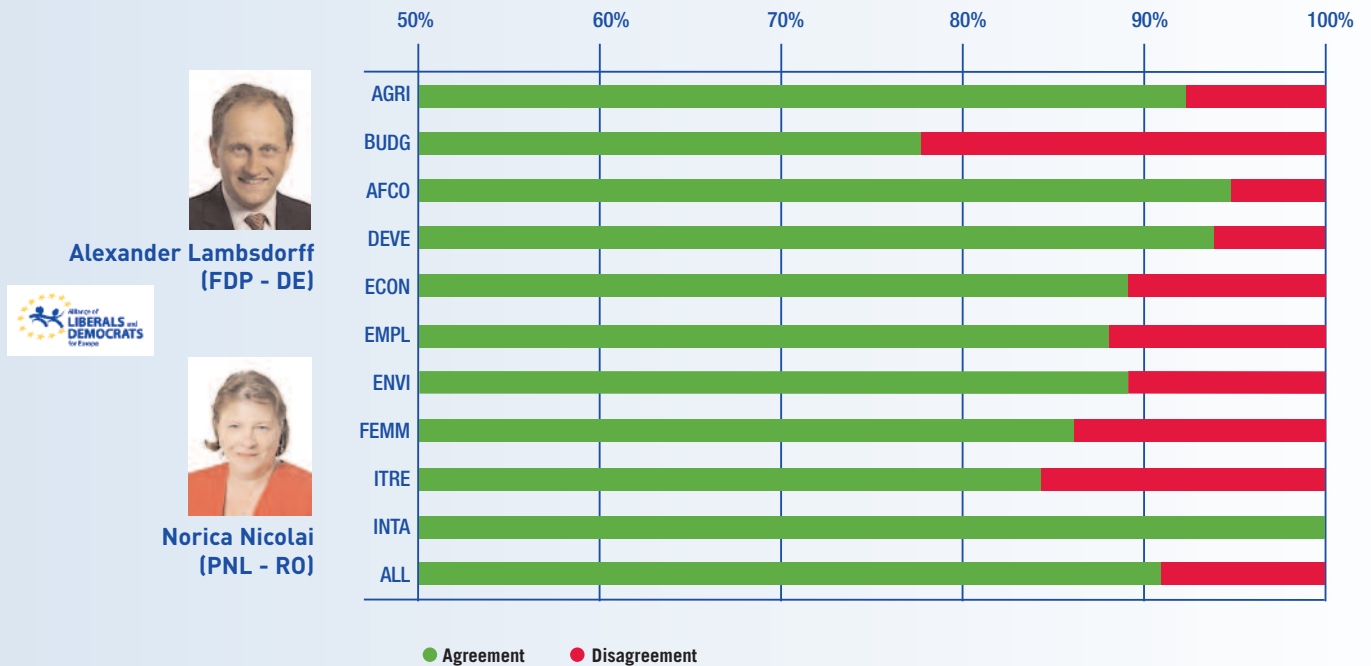
Alexander Lambsdorff (FDP - DE)



Marielle De Sarnez (MD - FR)

At the other end of the scale, the highest level of agreement has been between the leaders of the German and Romanian delegations (the same as in the S&D group):

Figure 27: Agreement / disagreement rates between Alexander Lambsdorff (FDP) and Norica Nicolai (PNL)



NEED AN IN-DEPTH, TAILOR-MADE ANALYSIS?

If you are an interest group, an NGO, a journalist or a private citizen and you want to know more about how each Member of the European Parliament represents your interests, or who holds the balance of power in a specific policy area, please contact VoteWatch at secretariat@votewatch.eu. We offer a number of paid-for services in addition to our regular, free-to-the-public work.

WHICH MEPS BEST REPRESENT YOUR INTERESTS?

Find out which Member of the European Parliament best represents you by checking out our latest interactive tool, VoteMatch! You vote on a set of European laws voted upon in the EP plenary and see which MEPs, national parties and European political groups match your views best:

http://votewatch.eu/cx_votematch.php?show_step=1

Part III: Who are the most powerful MEPs?

As VoteWatch.eu has shown in its reports⁴, the result of a vote in the European Parliament is dependent on many factors, such as the coalition formation pattern and the positions of national parties and individual MEPs within the European political groups. While investigating the balance of power between and within the European groups, we have also looked for the MEPs who are most likely to be on the winning side in roll-call votes.⁵

One MEP – Adina Valean (ALDE, Romania) – has been on the winning side more than any other – 90.2% of the time. The reason for this is that ALDE are the pivotal political group in the European Parliament in terms of voting behaviour, and Ms Valean is the pivotal MEP in this group.

MEPS IN MAJORITY WHEN VOTING, HIGHEST SCORES FROM EACH OF THE MEMBER STATES

Name	Member State	Party	Group	% in majority
Adina-Ioana V LEAN	ROMANIA	PARTIDUL NAȚIONAL LIBERAL	ALDE	90.24%
Riikka MANNER	FINLAND	SUOMEN KESKUSTA	ALDE	89.70%
Jean-Marie CAVADA	FRANCE	NOUVEAU CENTRE	EPP	89.65%
Ivo BELET	BELGIUM	CHRISTEN-DEMOCRATISCH & VLAAMS	EPP	89.58%
Romana JORDAN CIZELJ	SLOVENIA	SLOVENSKA DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA	EPP	89.21%
Leonidas DONSKIS	LITHUANIA	LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS LIBERALŲ SAJŪDIS	ALDE	89.03%
Siiri OVIIR	ESTONIA	EESTI KESKERAKOND	ALDE	88.98%
Sergej KOZLÍK	SLOVAKIA	ĽUDOVÁ STRANA - HNUTIE ZA DEMOKRATICKÉ SLOVENSKO	ALDE	88.95%
Britta REIMERS	GERMANY	FREIE DEMOKRATISCHE PARTEI	ALDE	88.84%
Jan KOZŁOWSKI	POLAND	PLATFORMA OBYWATELSKA	EPP	88.72%
Morten LØKKEGAARD	DENMARK	VENSTRE, DANMARKS LIBERALE PARTI	ALDE	88.69%
Antonyia PARVANOVA	BULGARIA	NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR STABILITY AND PROGRESS	ALDE	88.67%
Esther de LANGE	NETHERLANDS	CHRISTEN DEMOCRATISCH APPÈL	EPP	88.57%
Bill NEWTON DUNN	UNITED KINGDOM	LIBERAL DEMOCRATS PARTY	ALDE	88.43%
Carlos COELHO	PORTUGAL	PARTIDO SOCIAL DEMOCRATA	EPP	88.38%
Ivars GODMANIS	LATVIA	LATVIJAS PIRMĀ PARTIJA/LATVIJAS CEĻŠ	ALDE	88.25%
Amalia SARTORI	ITALY	IL POPOLO DELLA LIBERTÀ	EPP	88.21%
Ramon TREMOSA i BALCELLS	SPAIN	CONVERGÈNCIA DEMOCRÀTICA DE CATALUNYA	ALDE	87.88%
József SZÁJER	HUNGARY	FIDESZ-MAGYAR POLGÁRI SZÖVETSÉG-KERESZTÉNY DEMOKRATA NÉPPÁRT	EPP	87.32%
Olle SCHMIDT	SWEDEN	FOLKPARTIET LIBERALERNA	ALDE	87.03%
Charles GOERENS	LUXEMBOURG	PARTI DÉMOCRATIQUE	ALDE	86.91%
Jim HIGGINS	IRELAND	FINE GAEL PARTY	EPP	86.90%
Simon BUSUTTIL	MALTA	PARTIT NAZZJONALISTA	EPP	86.76%
Jan B EZINA	CZECH REPUBLIC	KŘESŤANSKÁ A DEMOKRATICKÁ UNIE - ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ STRANA LIDOVÁ	EPP	86.00%
Eleni THEOCHAROUS	CYPRUS	DIMOKRATIKOS SYNAGERMOS	EPP	85.12%
Ioannis A. TSOUKALAS	GREECE	NEA DIMOKRATIA	EPP	84.94%
Paul RÜBIG	AUSTRIA	ÖSTERREICHISCHE VOLKSPARTEI	EPP	84.48%

The table presents the overall results on all issues voted upon in the EP. However, the results vary greatly from one policy area to another. If you would like to know more about the key MEPs in a specific policy area, please contact the VoteWatch.eu team to learn more about our paid-for services.

⁴ To see our previous reports, visit <http://votewatch.eu/static/research.php>

⁵ The scores are calculated out of the total FOR+AGAINST votes cast by each MEP. Members who have not voted to at least 70% of the votes (such as the new comers) were not included in these calculations.

Conclusions

Voting behaviour in the European Parliament after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has become more dynamic, as the stakes have increased. MEPs continue to vote primarily along transnational ideological lines, but domestic political, regional and socio-economic interests - and/or individual preferences - can also influence the voting positions MEPs take.

Within the main European political groups, some national party delegations are more to the left while others more to the right. Specifically, the French parties tend to be further to the left of their group colleagues (in the three largest groups), while the British parties tend to be furthest to the right. The German parties, meanwhile, hold the balance of power in both the EPP and the S&D, while in ALDE none of the large national delegations has dominated the group so far. This latter finding is even more important when coupled with the fact that ALDE is the group that has been on the winning side the most in the first two years of the current term (although the EPP is catching up).

However, coalition patterns vary issue-by-issue, which means that more detailed topic-based analysis is required to identify the 'king-makers' on key subjects in the European Parliament.



VoteWatch.eu issues reports on political behaviour in the European Parliament every six months, and the work of individual MEPs and their political and national groups can be monitored continuously via the VoteWatch.eu website.

For further information, please visit our website at:

www.VoteWatch.eu

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