A fair European transnational list system
for European citizens and Member States

introducing the Ranked apportionment method

For more: eudemocracy.eu/ranked-apportionment-method-council-report

State of play

On 3rd May, the European Parliament adopted a report on the reform of the EU electoral act.

This report provides, among others, for the creation of second vote aimed at electing MEPs on a 28-seat transnational constituency.

Discussions will now begin between the Parliament and Council with a view of adopting the new electoral act in the Spring of 2023.

Note: this document summarises the European Parliament's proposal and the Ranked apportionment method, and links are provided to our main report (🔗), including a full drafting of the proposed amendments.

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European Parliament Proposal (1/2) 🔗

- **Single constituency:** all votes cast on the "second vote" are tallied at EU level.

- **Party proportionality:** seats attributed to lists in proportion to the votes they receive.

- **Straight distribution**: candidates are elected in the order on which they stand on their respective lists.

- **Avoiding over-representation:** Member States are split in three groups and the order of the list must alternate not just nationalities but also groups in "sections of three slots".

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# European Parliament Proposal (2/2)

Group A (5 Member States)			Group B (10 Member States)			Group C (12 Member States)		
	Member States	Population		Member States	Population		Member States	Population
1	Germany	83.166.711	6	Romania	19.328.838	16	Denmark	5.822.763
2	France	67.320.216	7	Netherlands	17.407.585	17	Finland	5.525.292
3	Italy	59.641.488	8	Belgium	11.522.440	18	Slovakia	5.457.873
4	Spain	47.332.614	9	Greece	10.718.565	19	Ireland	4.964.440
5	Poland	37.958.138	10	Czech Republic	10.693.939	20	Croatia	4.058.165
			11	Sweden	10.327.589	21	Lithuania	2.794.090
			12	Portugal	10.295.909	22	Slovenia	2.095.861
			13	Hungary	9.769.526	23	Latvia	1.907.675
			14	Austria	8.901.064	24	Estonia	1.328.976
			15	Bulgaria	6.951.482	25	Cyprus	888.005
						26	Luxembourg	626.108
						27	Malta	514.564

| Sections	Slot number	Candidate from
Section 1	1	A1
	2	B7
	3	C7
Section 2	4	B10
	5	C5
	6	A3
Section 3	7	A2
	8	C3
	9	B7
Section 4	10	B5
	11	C3
	12	A4
Section 5	13	A5
	14	C12
	15	B9
Section 6	16	A4
	17	A2
	18	B2
Section 7	19	B3
	20	A1
	21	B8
Section 8	22	C1
	23	C2
	24	B4
Section 9	25	A5
	26	C8
	27	B1
Section 10	28	B7

Group structure adopted by the European Parliament (left) and example of list ordering compatible with the group structure (right).

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Outcome (1/2) 🔗

- **Structural discrimination:** the group system structurally favours the largest countries of each group. Member States near the bottom of their group are systematically bypassed by smaller Member States.

- **Volatility:** seats attribution is greatly affected by the number and design of groups, and not solely by their own electoral performance.
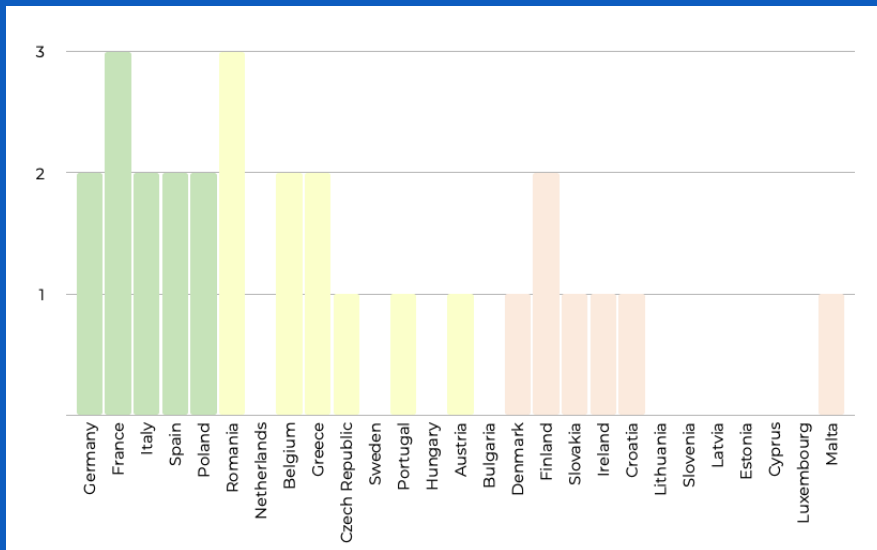
Seat distribution using adopted group system and 2019 electoral data
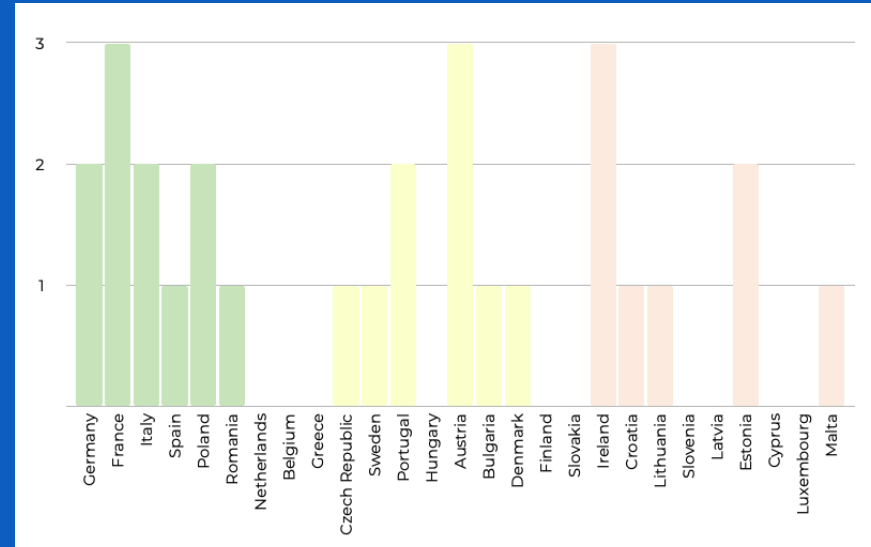
Seat distribution using three groups of 9 Member States and 2019 electoral data

Outcome

- **Over-representation:** while the over-representation of larger Member States is curtailed, there are clear cases of over-representation of small Member States.

- **Limited respect for lists/parties preferences:** while seats are attributed to candidates in the order of the re-ordered lists, the extensive re-ordering process fails to respect lists/parties preferences in the election of their candidates.

	ALDE	ECPM	ECR	EDP	EFA	EGP	EPP	ID	PEL	PES	Pirates	Volt
1	France	Nether.	Poland	France	Spain	Germany	Germany	Italy	France	Spain	Czech R	Germany
2	Spain	Germany	Italy	Germany	Belgium	France	Poland	France	France	Italy	Germany	Nether.
3	Romania	Romania	Spain	Spain	France	Belgium	Romania	Germany	Germany	Germany	Denmark	Spain
4	Nether.	Croatia	Czech R	Italy	Latvia	Italy	Spain	Belgium	Spain	Romania	Italy	Belgium
5	Denmark	Slovakia	Sweden	Romania	Italy	Nether.	Italy	Austria	Ireland	Portugal	France	Lux.
6	Germany	Spain	Nether.	Belgium	Germany	Austria	France	Finland	Portugal	Poland	Sweden	Bulgaria
7	Czech R	Italy	Greece	Greece	Greece	Sweden	Greece	Czech R	Cyprus	France	Spain	France
8	Belgium	Latvia	Latvia	Slovenia	Czech R	Finland	Austria	Denmark	Belgium	Nether.	Lux.	Italy
9	Sweden	France	Greece	Portugal	Slovakia	Denmark	Portugal	Nether.	Nether.	Sweden	Finland	Poland
10	Finland	Poland	Slovakia	Croatia	Poland	Ireland	Bulgaria	Estonia	Sweden	Austria	Nether.	Romania
11	Bulgaria	Belgium	Lithuania	Cyprus	Romania	Lithuania	Sweden	Hungary	Czech R	Hungary	Poland	Greece
12	Estonia	Greece	Germany	Poland	Nether.	Portugal	Nether.	Bulgaria	Finland	Bulgaria	Romania	Czech R
13	Slovakia	Czech R	Belgium	Nether.	Sweden	Spain	Ireland	Greece	Italy	Croatia	Belgium	Sweden
14	Hungary	Sweden	Croatia	Czech R	Portugal	Lux.	Czech R	Slovakia	Denmark	Malta	Greece	Portugal
15	Ireland	Portugal	France	Sweden	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	Poland	Romania	Belgium	Portugal	Hungary
16	Slovenia	Hungary	Lux.	Hungary	Austria	Czech R	Belgium	Spain	Slovenia	Denmark	Hungary	Austria
17	Lux.	Austria	Finland	Austria	Bulgaria	Hungary	Lithuania	Romania	Austria	Slovakia	Austria	Denmark
18	Italy	Bulgaria	Romania	Bulgaria	Denmark	Greece	Croatia	Sweden	Lux.	Greece	Bulgaria	Finland
19	Austria	Denmark	Portugal	Denmark	Finland	Croatia	Slovenia	Portugal	Estonia	Finland	Slovakia	Slovakia
20	Lithuania	Finland	Hungary	Finland	Ireland	Slovenia	Finland	Ireland	Poland	Lithuania	Ireland	Ireland
21	Croatia	Ireland	Austria	Slovakia	Croatia	Bulgaria	Latvia	Croatia	Hungary	Slovenia	Croatia	Croatia
22	Latvia	Lithuania	Denmark	Ireland	Lithuania	Estonia	Malta	Lithuania	Bulgaria	Latvia	Lithuania	Lithuania
23	Poland	Slovenia	Ireland	Lithuania	Slovenia	Cyprus	Cyprus	Slovenia	Slovakia	Estonia	Slovenia	Slovenia
24	Greece	Estonia	Slovenia	Latvia	Estonia	Malta	Lux.	Latvia	Croatia	Cyprus	Latvia	Latvia
25	Portugal	Cyprus	Estonia	Estonia	Cyprus	Romania	Hungary	Cyprus	Lithuania	Czech R	Estonia	Estonia
26	Cyprus	Lux.	Cyprus	Lux.	Lux.	Slovakia	Denmark	Lux.	Latvia	Lux.	Cyprus	Cyprus
27	Malta	Malta	Malta	Malta	Malta	Latvia	Estonia	Malta	Malta	Ireland	Malta	Malta
	3		2			6	17	3	0	18		

Location of elected candidates (in green) on the original ranking of transnational lists

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Solution 🔗

The **Ranked apportionment** method addresses these shortcomings using two complementary mechanisms.

A **second apportionment**, using Member States' populations, provides the maximum number of citizens each Member State can elect.

This is supplemented with cut-off and floor values, and can be modulated as necessary. 🔗

The result of the vote is then used to identify a list of priority (**a ranking**) for the distribution of seats among lists/parties.

Better-fairing lists/parties are given priority as a reward for electoral performance.

Member State	Total population	Seats appor.	Member State	Total population	Seats appor.
Germany	83.166.711	5	Bulgaria	6.951.482	1
France	67.320.216	4	Denmark	5.822.763	1
Italy	59.641.488	4	Finland	5.525.292	1
Spain	47.332.614	3	Slovakia	5.457.873	1
Poland	37.958.138	3	Ireland	4.964.440	1
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Portugal	10.295.909	1	Luxembourg	626.108	1
Hungary	9.769.526	1	Malta	514.564	1
Austria	8.901.064	1			

Seat	List	Seat	List	Seat	List	Seat	List
1	EPP	8	EPP	15	EGP	22	ALDE
2	PES	9	ECR	16	PES	23	PEL
3	ID	10	PEL	17	EPP	24	EGP
4	EPP	11	PES	18	ID	25	PES
5	ALDE	12	ID	19	PES	26	EPP
6	EGP	13	EPP	20	EPP	27	ID
7	PES	14	ALDE	21	ECR	28	EPP

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Process 🔗

The Ranked apportionment method can be summarised as follows:

"When distributing seats according to the established ranking,
no Member State shall see more of its citizens elected — from all
electoral lists combined — than its apportioned number of seats."

For example, according to the table above (based on the 2019 elections):

- The first seat goes to the EPP, with its first candidate from Germany; the candidate is elected, and Germany is noted as having one citizen elected.

- The second seat goes to the PES, with its first candidate from Spain; the candidate is elected, and Spain is noted as having one citizens elected.

- The process is repeated for each of the 28 seats to be filled.

- However, while seat 16 should go to a candidate from Romania (the PES' fourth candidate), Romania has already reached its quota of 1 (seat 8, EPP). The PES' fourth candidate is therefore crossed off the list and the seat is assigned to the PES' next-available candidate – candidate 5 from Portugal, which has not yet reached its quota.

Outcome (1/2) 🔗

- **No discrimination:** the distribution of seats is entirely based on electoral performance, with no structural advantage based on extrinsic criteria.

- **Consistency:** seats distribution remains consistent regardless of the fine-tuning of the system, with no unexplained volatility.
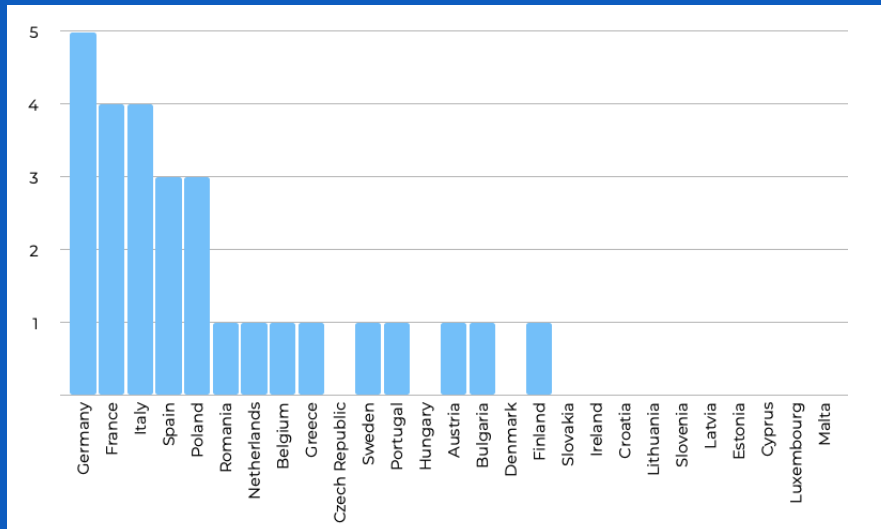
Seat distribution using the Ranked apportionment method and 2019 electoral data (regular Webster apportionment)
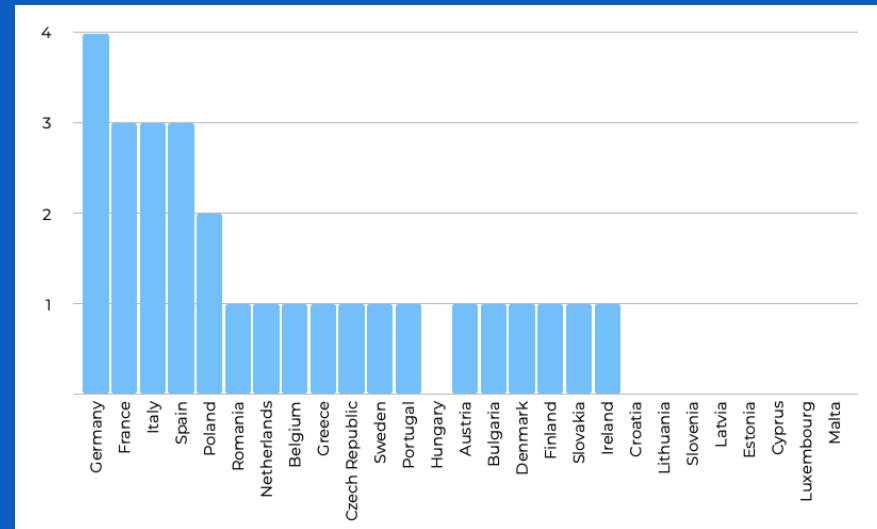
Seat distribution using the Ranked apportionment method and 2019 electoral data (regressive Webster apportionment)

Outcome (2/2)

- **No over-representation:** the distribution of seats is in line with the demographic weight of Member States, avoiding over-representation.

- **Respect for lists/parties preferences:** with minor exceptions, the distribution of seat respects the preferences of lists/parties.

Location of elected candidates (in green) on the original ranking of transnational lists

Comparison of the impact of the group system (left) and Ranked apportionment method (right) on the distribution of seats

Comparison 🔗

EP group system

- Single constituency, votes tallied at EU level ✓

- Seats attributed in proportion to votes ✓

- Distribution based on design of the group system (extrinsic factor) creating structural discrimination ✗

- Over-representation still occurs for medium and small Member States ✗

- High impact on list ordering ✗

Ranked apportionment method

- Single constituency, votes tallied at EU level ✓

- Seats attributed in proportion to votes ✓

- Distribution only based on electoral performance and demography (intrinsic factors) ✓

- Fair geographical representation ensured for all Member states ✓

- Minimal impact on list ordering ✓

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In conclusion 🔗

- A legislature should seek to ensure **party proportionality** as well as the election of candidates **close to citizens**. Doing this in the EU requires treaty change. Transnational lists and the Spitzenkandidat are the next-best thing, but they **must not be expected to represent citizens locally**. Instead, they provide political representation.

- Transnational lists are **not necessary** to assess the support of each European party/group; current vote results and MEPs already express this support. However, a transnational constituency **gives a body** to this support. But it cannot be limited to a few candidates: fewer than **40 candidates** greatly hampers party proportionality and geographical balance, and fails to provide the legitimacy that the Spitzenkandidat system requires.

- The Ranked apportionment method **respect party proportionality** and ensures the highest level of **fairness in Member State representation**. It only imposes very limited requirements, and is easy to explain and implement. **The Ranked apportionment method is the optimal method for European transnational lists**.

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Additional considerations

Beyond the *distribution system*, other parameters must be considered.

- Apportionment method: **Webster** is more neutral than D'Hondt (which favours larger parties).

- Gender balance: lists should be **gender-alternate** (with no two consecutive positions occupied by candidates of the same gender)

- Member State criteria: **citizenship** should be used over residence (the transnational constituency is not meant to ensure geographical distribution but political diversity; it does not matter where candidates currently live, but instead where they stem from).

- Engaging citizens: **open** lists contribute to involving citizens in the choice of their representatives.

- Number of candidates: no need to require lists/parties to have too many candidates as most will not be elected anyway; this is a needless burden on small parties (9 should be a maximum).

- Double candidacies: candidates (at least, list leaders) should be allowed to feature both on European and national lists to ensure the election of the Spitzenkandidaten (where a list earns at least one seat), foster links between national and European levels, and avoid EU lists of second-grade candidates (as the transnational lists seems too risky).

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