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European Parliamentary Elections 2024: An Analysis



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The two largest democratic exercises in the year 2024 with Indian general elections and the European Parliamentary elections witnessed the resurgence of right-wing power in the political scenario. However, the elections of the European Union are much more than that and it reflects the complexities of electing 705 representatives at a transnational and regional level from a bloc of 450 million people. The entire process of the election went on for four days from the 6th of June to 9th of June deciding the fate for a total of eight political groups and a group of "Non- Inscrits", the members of which are independent and do not belong to any political groups.

The European Parliamentary Elections although are second order elections, the dependency of the national governments have aligned with the supranational umbrella of the European community even with the recent surge of populism and Euroscepticism among the citizens of the member states. This could be observed with the rising number of voters for the Parliamentary elections in recent times despite the number being less than the national elections (Ehin and Talving 2021). The European political landscape at the regional level has five major political groups, each represented by multiple political parties. These groups have the traditional political positioning of left, right and centre along with the liberals and the greens (a political force advocating for environment sustainability). The voting methods are varied and differ from country to country which ranges from voting in booths to postal ballots to e-voting. The electoral age is not uniform and includes the minimum limit from 16 (Germany, Belgium), 17 (Greece) and the more common age of 18 (Singla 2024).

The 2024 Parliamentary elections of the European Union saw a shift in the political landscape of the region as the result brought joy to some while others who held ground for years have lost. Looking at the wins, it can be observed that the biggest shift, although not unpredictable was the dominance of the right-wing parties which was the result of the persistence of a general attitude of Euroscepticism and ethnocentrism which has given rise to radical far-right parties in the region (Joannin 2023). While right wing parties are a part of a broad spectrum of political ideologies from centre-right to conservatism and far-right parties, the far-right groups remain the strongest group with regards to the electoral gains. Popular faces whose parties have won include Marine Le Pen's National Rally and Meloni's Brothers of Italy who challenged the mainstream parties of the Union on the ideas of immigration to national identity and EU integration (Banerjee 2024). Reference can also be made to that of Alternative für Deutschland (AFD), a far-right party of Germany which has also witnessed huge wins in the recent municipal elections, has beaten Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party namely the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in the recent EU parliamentary elections.

However, despite the surge of the far-right parties, the dominance of the centrist parties remains as the European People's Party (EPP) led by Ursula von der Leyen has once again swept the parliamentary elections with 189 seats gaining 13 more seats than the 2019 elections (Pietromarchi 2024). The second biggest bloc that emerged as the winner is the centre left party namely the Socialist and Democrats (SD) who despite losing some seats compared to the last elections has managed to hold their fort with a total of 135 votes (Banerjee 2024).

The election outcomes represented a significant disappointment for liberal and Green parties. The liberals and the greens had a varying level of success as they have a good presence in some of the countries while in some, they have struggled to become visible. The European region has seen multiple protests and policies as the liberals and the greens have tried to advocate for new laws pushing for sustainability have provoked the farmers that have brought changes by the new laws. The non-inscrits gained a minuscule fragment of only 45 seats as they saw a loss as they lost 17 seats compared to the 2019 elections.

Perhaps the most shocking outcome was the defeat of President Macron losing against Le Pen's party which resulted in the President taking a drastic step of dissolving the French parliament after the announcement. President Macron did not run as a candidate for the EU elections but the humbling results pushed him to take the sudden decision of an immediate snap poll keeping a faith in the democratic faith in the brief of the people's voice. Similarly, Olaf Scholz losing against the AFD party of Germany is another shocker this election but unlike President Macron, Germany is not counting on snap polls.

As the results of such a complicated election process have not shown the dominance of any single party throughout the region, it can be safely said that a coalition is the answer for the regional governance of the Union. As such, alliances will be formed and formal decisions will be taken in a meeting that will be held by June 20th. However, it can be observed with certainty that governance with a coalition body might not see the best results for the region in the next five years.

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