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Populism and Sustainable Development Policy in Europe

24 May 2019, Alexander Carius and Stella Schaller (adelphi)

17th ESDN Workshop



**PLUS LIBRES
FORTS!**
UNE AUTRE EUROPE EST POSSIBLE



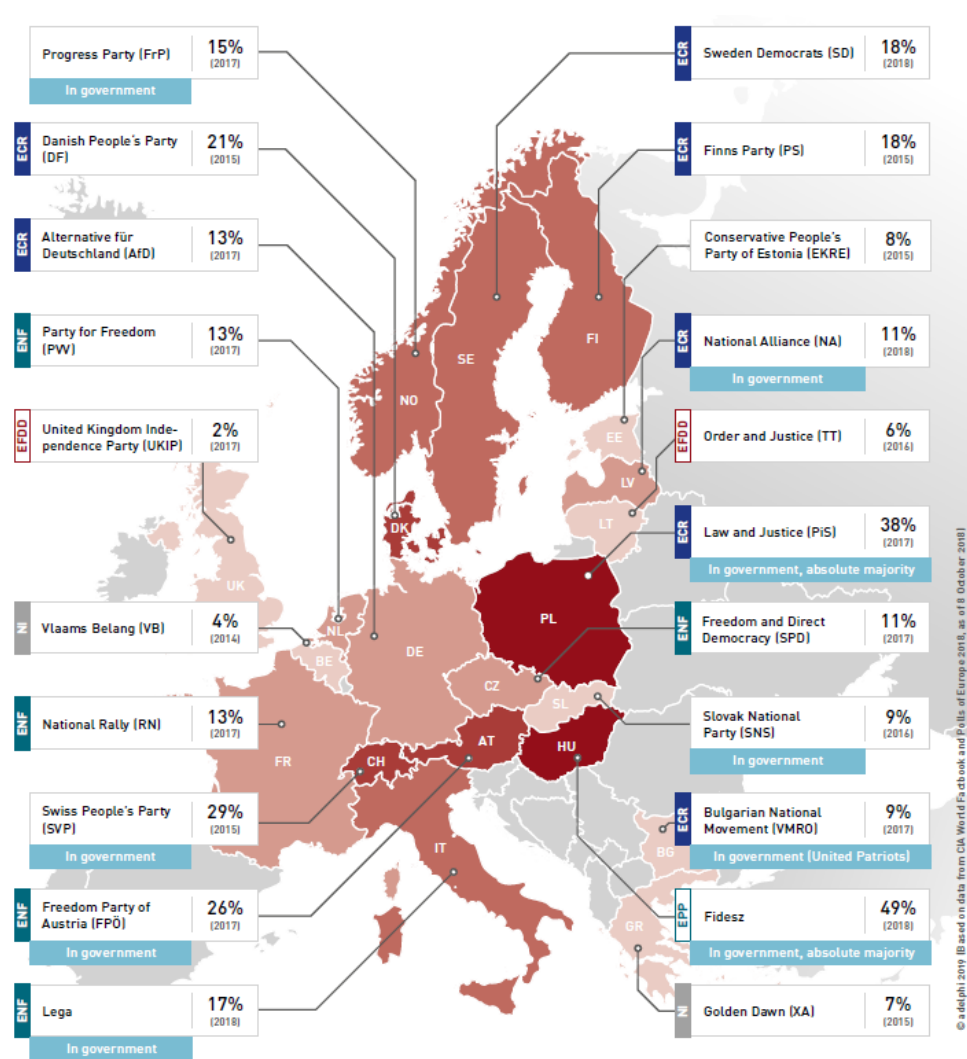
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28 JANVIER 2016
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Horizon Scanner

Right-wing populist parties...

- ...may retain **22-25%** of seats in the new EP
- ...may be represented in the new EU Commission
- ...are represented in **23 of 28** national parliaments in EU countries
- ... form part of **8 governments** in EU countries
- ...hold an **absolute majority** in 2 EU countries



Where right-wing populists stand on climate change science

Denialist |
Skeptical



Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs / Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) ²⁵
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti / Danish People's Party (DF) ²⁶
Estonia	Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond / Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE)
Germany	Alternative für Deutschland / Alternative for Germany (AfD)
Great Britain	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)
Netherlands	Partij voor de Vrijheid / Party for Freedom (PVV)
Sweden	Sverigedemokraterna / Sweden Democrats (SD)

Disengaged |
Cautious



Czech Republic	Svoboda a přímá demokracie – Tomio Okamura / Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)
France	National Rally (former National Front) (RN)
Greece	Chrysi Avgi / Golden Dawn (XA)
Italy	Lega Nord (Lega)
Lithuania	Tvarka ir teisingumas / Order and Justice (TT)
Norway	Progress Party (PP)
Belgium	Vlaams Belang / Flemish Interest (VB)
Bulgaria	Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie / Bulgarian National Movement (VMRO)
Poland	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość / Law and Justice (PiS)
Slovakia	Slovenská národná strana / Slovak National Party (SNS)
Switzerland	Schweizerische Volkspartei / Swiss People's Party (SVP)

Affirmative



Finland	Perussuomalaiset / Finns Party (PS)
Hungary	Fidesz
Latvia	Nacionālā Apvienība / National Alliance (NA)

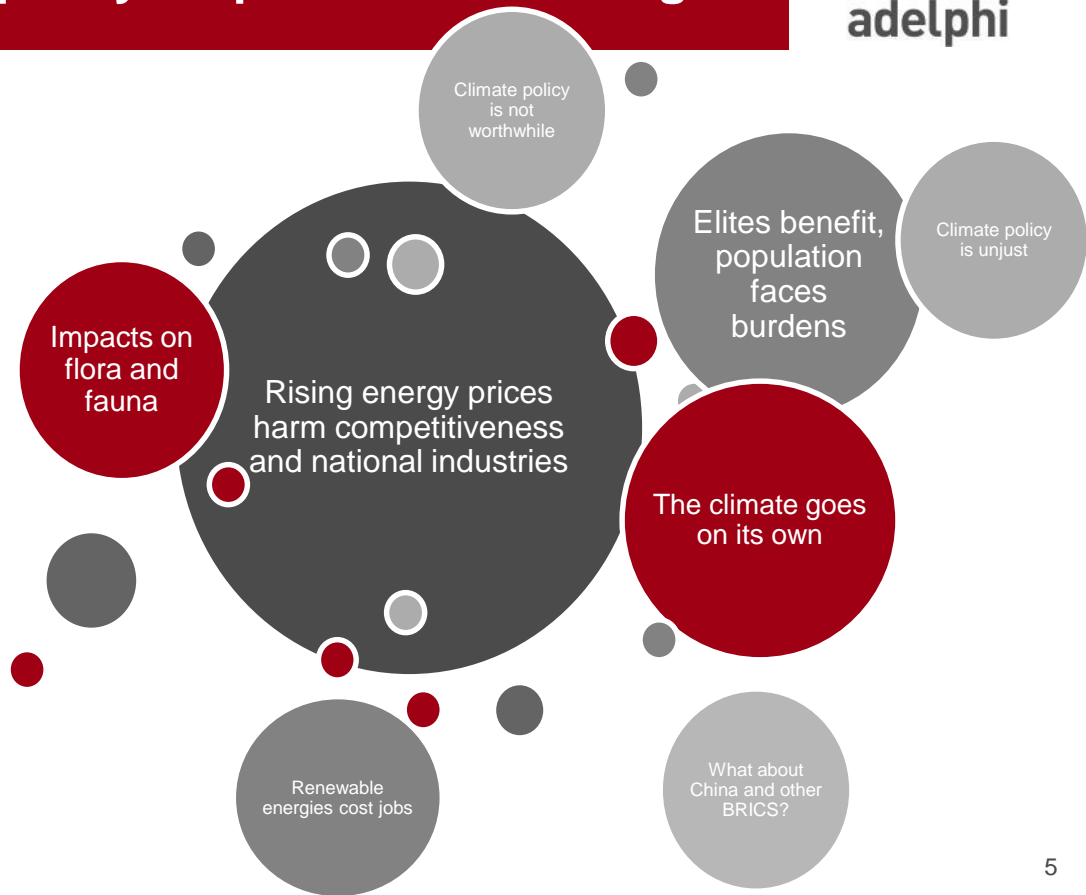
Arguments against climate policy: a question of framing



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Four main arguments against climate policy:

1. Economically unfavorable
2. Socially unfair
3. Environmentally harmful
4. Politically ineffective and illegitimate



Opposition to climate policy for environmental reasons

- Vlaams Belang: *“We reject the instalment [of wind turbines] in areas of open space, especially in scenically valuable agricultural and natural areas.”*
- AfD: *“Für Windkraft wird Naturerbe abgeholzt. [...] Windkraftanlagen töten Hunderttausende Vögel”*



Support of domestic environmentalism (localism)

- Golden Dawn: *“The environment is the cradle of our race, it mirrors our culture and civilisation, and it is therefore our duty to protect it.”*
- Rassemblement National: *“who is rooted in their home, is an ecologist”, “nomadic [people] do not care about the environment; they have no homeland.” (Marine le Pen)*



Analysis of 22 votes on important climate and energy policies (2009-2014; 2014-2019)

- ETS: Cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments (2017)
- ESR: Binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement (2017)
- Energy efficiency (2018)
- Governance of the Energy Union (2018)
- Climate diplomacy report (2018)
- CO2 emissions for cars (2018)
- Various COP resolutions (UNFCCC)
-

FIG 5

Right-wing populist parties' position climate and energy votes (2014 – 2018) counting votes for 13 important climate proposals*

- Against
- For
- Abstentions

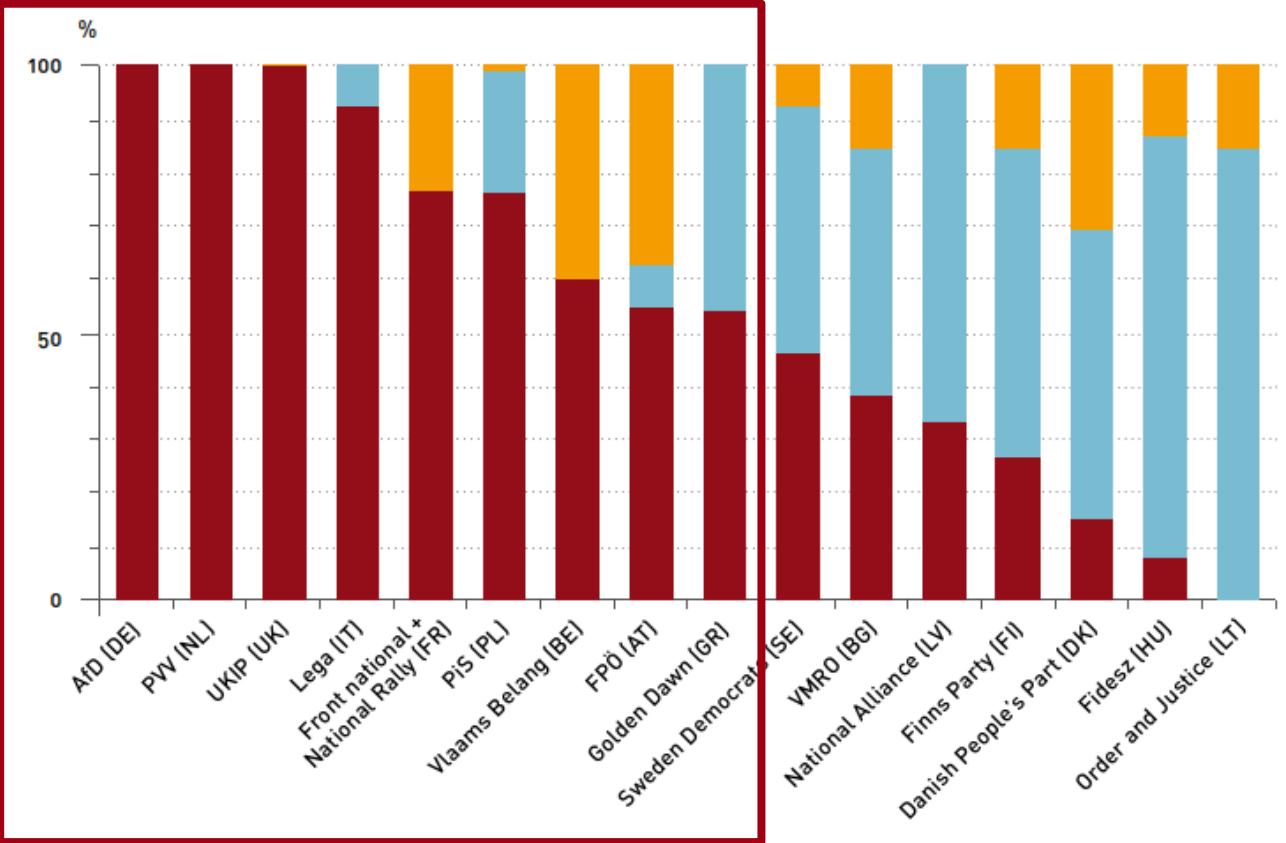





FIG 7

Right-wing populist parties' position climate and energy votes
 (2009–2014) counting votes for 13 important climate proposals*

-  Against
-  For
-  Abstentions

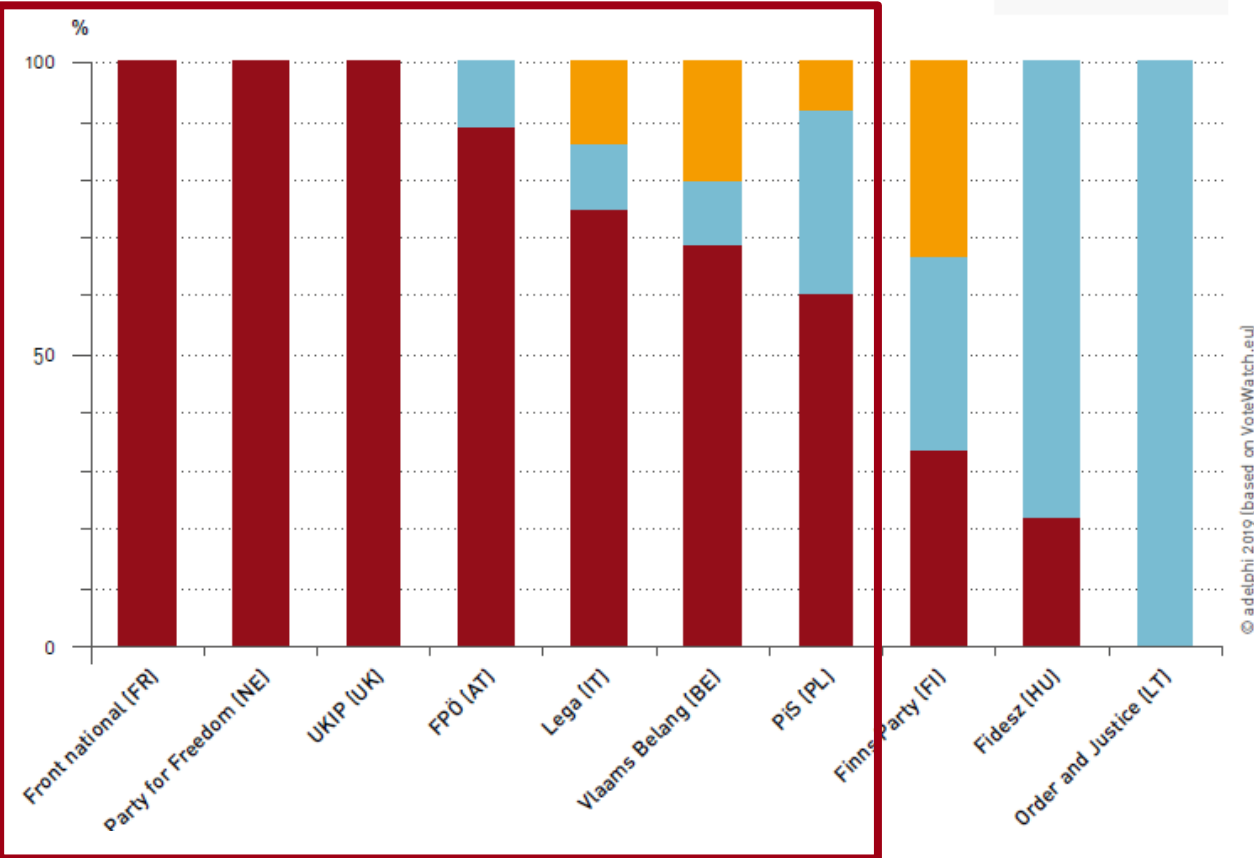
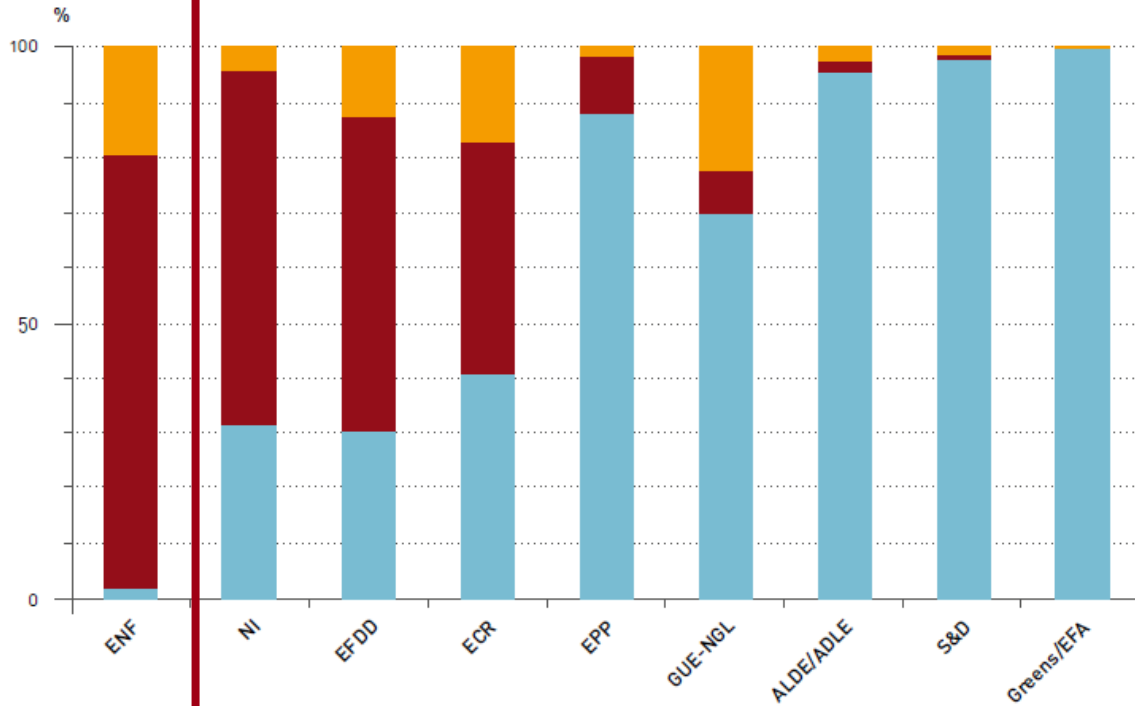


FIG 10

Position on climate change by political group (2009 – 2018) counting votes for 22 important climate proposals

- Against
- For
- Abstentions



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Where do EU political groups stand on fighting climate change?



POLITICAL GROUP

AVERAGE GROUP SCORE %

MEPS

Greens/EFA

Greens-European Free Alliance



84.9%

52

GUE/NGL

European United Left-Nordic Green Left



66.5%

51

S&D

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats



61.3%

188

EFDD

Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy



40.9%

43

ALDE

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe



38.1%

68

NA/NI

Non-affiliated (no group)



24.0%

23

ENF

Europe of Nations and Freedom



15.2%

34

EPP

European People's Party



14.3%

219

ECR

European Conservatives and Reformists



10.0%

73

DEFENDERS



DELAYERS



DINOSAURS



Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe (2019):
Defenders, Delayers or Dinosaurs: where do EU political groups stand on climate change?

Liberal democracy is the foundation of global climate policy



Climate policy ...

- demands **science-based policy making** under uncertainty
- needs profound **discourse** on transformative change
- requires **preventative measures** given scale, impact and irreversibility
- benefits from active **citizen engagement**
- relies on **multilateralism**
- requires **free press** and **independent jurisdiction**



Climate sceptics undermine evidence-based policy-making





Democracy's enemies are gaining momentum



Dangerous Liaisons in the European Parliament?



EU climate policy is not decided at the polarised margins.



Ambitious climate policy is a steepening uphill struggle

Report:

Schaller, Stella and Alexander Carius (2019): Convenient Truths: Mapping climate agendas of right-wing populist parties in Europe Berlin: adelphi.

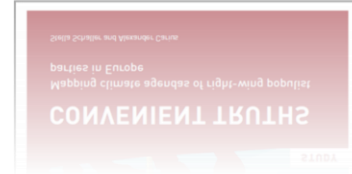
<https://www.adelphi.de/de/publikation/convenient-truths>

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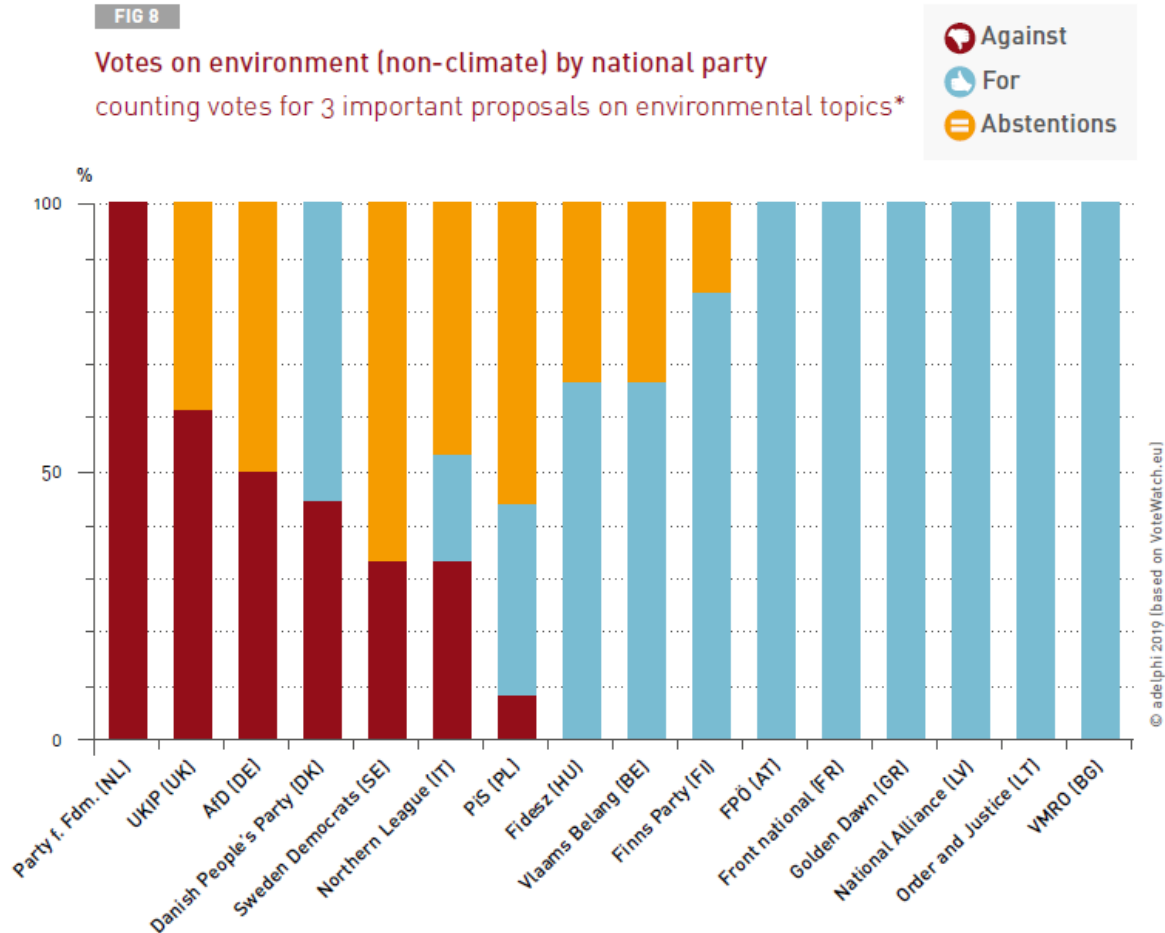


Thank you for your attention.



FIG 8




Votes on environment (non-climate) by national party counting votes for 3 important proposals on environmental topics*

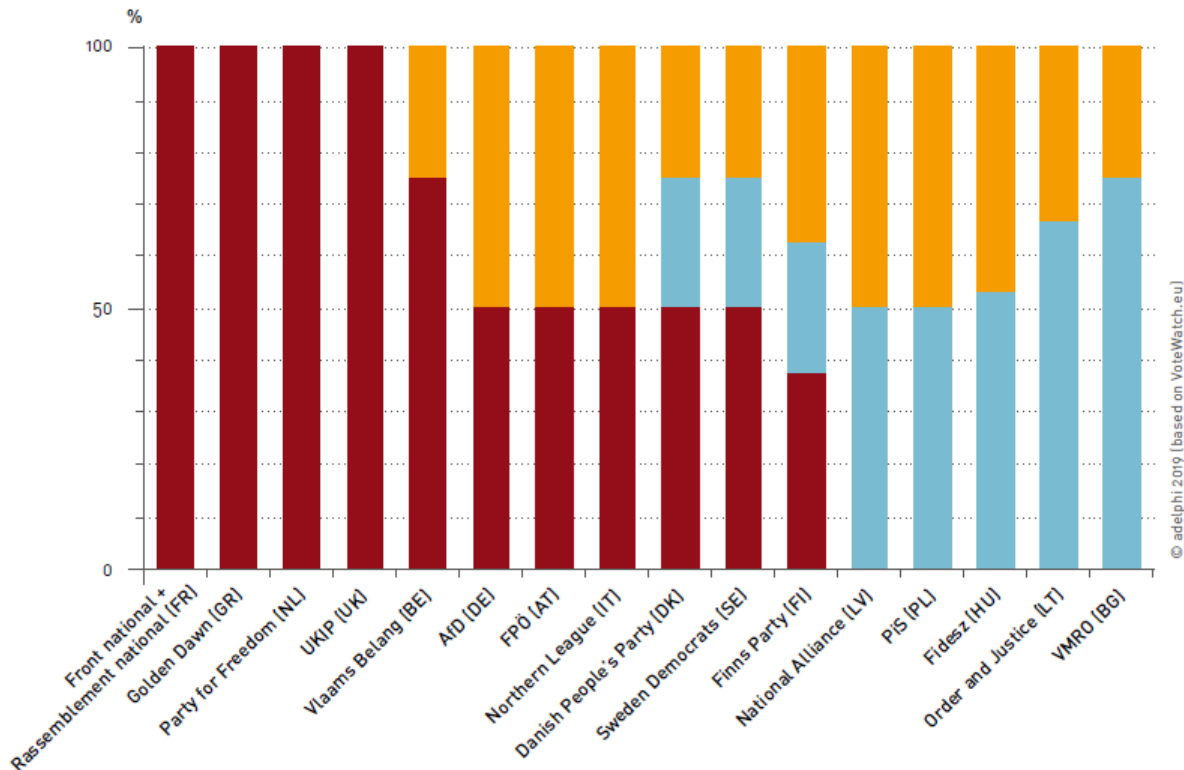


Total right-wing populist MEPs in the sample (n=): 93. The German AfD participated only in one vote and abstained.

FIG 9

Votes on multilateral cooperation (non-climate) by national party counting votes for 4 important proposals on multilateral cooperation*

-  Against
-  For
-  Abstentions

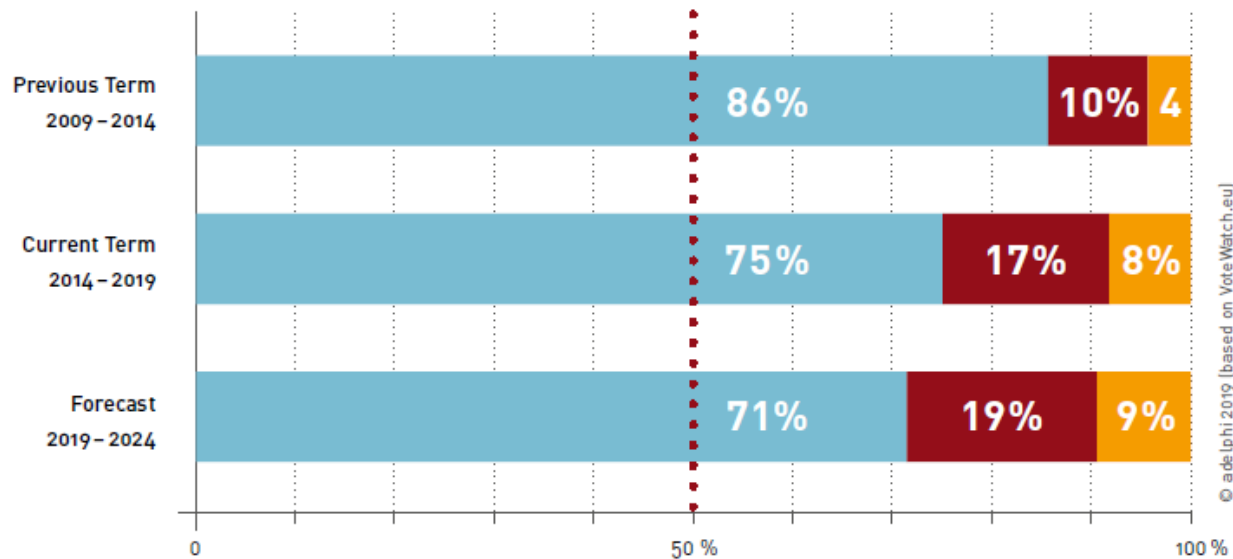


Total right-wing populist MEPs in the sample (n=): 93.



Positions on climate and sustainable energy policies over time
2019 forecast based on aggregate national polls and expected
seats in each political group. Counting votes for 22 important
climate proposals as above.

- Against
- For
- Abstentions



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