

The Polycrisis Epoch in the Ninth European Parliament Term
The Impact of Institutional and Ideological Parameters on Legislative Behavior



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Abstract

Founded in 1952, the European Parliament has progressed through transformational constitutional processes into the primary bearer of democracy within the European Union as its only directly elected institution. As several studies have reported on legislative behavior in previous European Parliament terms, this thesis aims to capture the effects of electoral systems, parliamentary groups' ideological orientation, and policy salience on legislative behavior of Members of the European Parliament during its ninth term (2019-2024). This thesis relies on a range of theories, from rational choice institutionalism to concepts of ideologies and policy salience, alongside previous studies, to generate testable hypotheses. Conducting a statistical analysis of voting records, the research contributes to the academic discourse on how institutional and ideological parameters shape European party groups' cohesion in the aftermath of the 2019 European Parliament elections. The thematic analysis suggests that certain aspects of parliamentarians' defection from their party group majority votes can primarily be affected by ideological groupings and policy areas rather than institutional electoral parameters.

Keywords: European Parliament, defection, electoral systems, political grouping, policy salience

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List of Abbreviations

CC: Candidate-Centered

CL: Closed List

EC: Electoral College

ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists

EP: European Parliament

EPG: European Party Group

EPP: European People's Party

EU: European Union

Greens/EFA: Greens/European Free Alliance

GUE/NGL: European United Left/Nordic Green Left (currently 'The Left')

IDG: Identity and Democracy Group

LC: Language Community

NI: Non-Instructs

NI: Northern Ireland

NP: National Party

OL: Open List

PC: Party-Centered

PR: Proportional Representation

PV: Preferential Vote

RCI: Rational Choice Institutionalism

RCV: Roll Call Vote

RE/REG: Renew Europe Group

RRP: Radical Right Populist

S&D: Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

SOM: Semi-Open List

STV: Single Transferable Vote

UK: United Kingdom

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1 Introduction

The establishment of contemporary representative democracies has long relied on the idea of indirect representation of citizens in contrast to the earliest concept of direct democracy in ancient Athens (Tridimas, 2019: 983-984). The emergence of political groupings, such as parties and parliamentary groups, in modern times has essentially solved numerous information and coordination issues of legislation (see, e.g., Tridimas, 2019: 983-984). Therefore, investigating the interplay of parliamentary party groups with the political system and the electorate has been central to the discipline of political science (see, e.g., Heidar & Koole, 2000). Given the fundamental role of the European Parliament in European politics, the focus of the thesis lies on the defection of members of the ninth European Parliament term from their European party group majority votes, while applying theoretical and analytical frameworks previously employed to examine similar topics. In the following text, the terms ‘EU’ and ‘Union’ (for the European Union), ‘EP’ and ‘Parliament’ (for the European Parliament), as well as ‘MEPs’, ‘parliamentarians’, and ‘legislators’ (for Members of the European Parliament), are used interchangeably. To pave the way to understanding legislative behavior in the European Parliament, the thesis’s introductory part aims at identifying the research puzzle, background, and formulating the research questions.

1.1 Research Puzzle

An integral part of the studies on politics is that “electoral institutions do matter” (Hix, 2004). Drawing from this principle, it is becoming increasingly intriguing to explore how different electoral institutions shape the legislative behavior of MEPs in the event of emerging political developments. An essential aspect of MEPs’ legislative behavior has been their defection from their European Parliament party group in voting. The way MEPs behave in voting processes represents a critical aspect of legislative behavior and reflects the tensions between national and European political priorities, ideology, and the role of macroscopic

elements of electoral systems. From this angle, the objective of this thesis is to extend previous studies reporting on the development of MEPs' behavior patterns and group cohesion in the EP. The addition of electoral institutions as research variables makes it possible to incorporate the emerging political landscape of the ninth Parliament into the academic discourse.

In tandem with the electoral institutions, ideological inclinations and policy areas also constitute factors shaping legislative behavior in the EP. The evolution of European party groups has heavily relied upon national party delegations' objectives at a European level. The tendency of elected MEPs to sit in long-standing groups shaped by loose or strict ideological lines has always been the norm (McDonnell & Werner, 2020a). Various ideological orientations have given the opportunity to like-minded parties and politicians to unite in the Parliament by forming European Party Groups (EPGs). These groups are not necessarily connected to greater European parties. Still, most of them do, as is the center-right European People's Party, represented by the homonymous EPP group in Parliament. Besides ideology, EPGs might also be created for more practical purposes. EPG membership gives their members access to resources and provides influence over policy-making processes in the Parliament (Bressanelli, 2012). In any case, national parties consider ideological and policy affinity as unifying elements of an EPG (Bressanelli, 2012). All in all, a transnational affiliation in the EP confirms that EPGs are shaped by a large margin by cross-national policy and ideological objectives.

As new political forces emerge in Parliament, the question of how EPGs are formed remains. The roots of their development are still expanding toward a broader context of policy and ideology. In that manner, they aim to expand their membership by even setting ideological constraints aside (Bressanelli, 2012). This could explain why EPGs' cohesion can be challenged from time to time by higher defection rates driven by ideological incompatibility and internal dynamics (Cicchi, 2017). The EP, overall, is characterized by high cohesion with either a united front among the EPG's members or voting patterns aligned with left-right division lines (Cicchi, 2017). The emergence of new dynamics in EP9, elaborated below, raises the question of how ideological groupings shape defection rates. In

consequence, it is thought-provoking how the unifying elements of ideology and policy salience undermine or expand defection.

1.2 Research Aim & Questions

The aim of the thesis is to reveal the impact of electoral institutions, ideological inclinations, and policy areas on defection rates in the ninth term of the EP. As coalition building also fluctuates among policy areas and relies on the strategies of EPGs and national parties (Hix & Høyland, 2013; Kreppel, 2000; Broniecki & Høyland, 2023b), EP politics have been governed by the unspoken loose coalition between the center-right (EPP), the center-left (S&D), and the liberal (RE) groups (Marié, 2019; Brack et al., 2024). Nevertheless, it has been found that the relationship between traditional formal or informal structures, such as ideological alignment and political institutions, fluctuates as the Union evolves. In this setting, this thesis's objective is twofold. First, the research aims to cover the gap related to the effects of electoral system elements: i. candidate selection, ii. district magnitude, and iii. electoral thresholds in legislative behavior. Second, the goal is to scrutinize how ideological differences and policy areas affect defection rates in various EPGs.

In that manner, the defection of MEPs from their EPGs will be analyzed in the ninth term of the EP amid the mixture of polycrisis, which is defined below. Ultimately, I aim to contribute to the EU scholarship by conducting research inspired by Hix and Faas' pieces of academic work applied in the ninth term of the EP (Hix, 2002; 2004; Faas, 2002; 2003). The application of a framework used in different terms of the EP facilitates the research to develop testable predictions regarding the outcome of the analysis and to compare current and previous propensities (Clarke & Primo, 2007). In this sense, the thesis examines how MEP defection rates from EPGs have been influenced by the electoral systems, ideological groupings, and policy areas between 2019 and 2022. The research questions, therefore, emerge as follows:

RQ1: What are the effects of electoral systems on the defection of MEPs in the ninth term of the European Parliament?

RQ2: What are the effects of ideological inclination and policy areas on the defection of MEPs in the ninth term of the European Parliament?

The questions intend to underline the significance of institutional constraints as well as ideologically political in elaborating legislative behavior. Furthermore, it serves as a starting point for identifying how electoral design and parties' structures influence representation, the quality of democracy, and institutional mechanics. In accordance with informing the discourse on European democracy, the questions ultimately aim to relate the existing challenges to the quality of legislative functions and decision-making processes while renewing an applied research design to the recently emerging political environment.

1.3 The Composition of the Ninth European Parliament

The 2019 European Parliament elections took place from 23 to 26 May and marked the ninth direct election since 1979 (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020). In the second-largest democratic elections worldwide, all 751 seats were at stake to represent more than 400 million citizens across all 28 member states (Mudde, 2019). Originally, the Parliament had approved a seat reduction from 751 to 705 as a result of the UK's withdrawal in March 2019. Nonetheless, the extension of the UK's membership until 2020 meant the total number of MEPs remained at 751, with no direct adjustments to national delegations (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020). The elections took an important turn since they set the stage for a shifting political landscape in the EU in its entirety and for the reallocation of the seats after 2020.

The election results led to profound changes in the dynamics between European political families. The center-right European People's Party (EPP) remained the largest group with 182 seats, followed by the center-left Socialists and Democrats (S&D) with 154 seats, losing 34 and 31 seats respectively (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020). The results revealed a decline for these mainstream center-left and center-right parties. Yet, they signified great

gains for the pro-EU liberal Renew Europe (RE) and the Greens (G/EFA), as shown on Table 1. They increased their share of seats by 39 and 22 seats, respectively (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020). The Eurosceptic far-right populist Identity and Democracy (IDG) also gained 37 seats by raising its total share of seats to 73. The Eurosceptic right-wing conservative European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and left-wing GUE/NGL suffered moderate losses by gaining 62 and 41 seats respectively. Lastly, the Non-Inscrits (NI), the non-attached MEPs, expanded to 57 seats. The elections left the traditionally governing blocs weakened as liberals, Greens, and right-wing populists gained influence.

<i>Table 1.: Political Groups in The Eighth and Ninth European Parliaments (Mudde, 2019)</i>			
<i>Party Group</i>	<i>Seats (Eighth EP)</i>	<i>Seats (Ninth EP before Brexit)</i>	<i>Change</i>
<i>EPP</i>	216	182	-34
<i>S&D</i>	185	154	-31
<i>RE</i>	69	108	+39
<i>G/EFA</i>	52	74	+22
<i>IDG</i>	36	73	+37
<i>ECR</i>	77	62	-15
<i>GUE/NGL</i>	52	41	-11
<i>NI</i>	20	57	+37
<i>Total Seats</i>	749	751	

1.4 The European Parliament Amid a Polycrisis

In the context of the EU, a plethora of political decisions are today taken by the EP rather than national political institutions (see, e.g., Klüver & Spoon, 2015). The extension of EP's powers has also led, to a certain degree, to a parliamentarization of the political system of the Union (Burns, 2022: 176-177). While the tendency to expand the Parliament's role signifies a shift toward enhancing democracy in the EU, European elections have continuously been regarded as incidental to the national polls by the electorate and political actors (Burns, 2022: 186). Nevertheless, the EP has materially and institutionally evolved into one of the foremost democracy bearers for the EU today in a post-Lisbon Treaty political environment (see, e.g., Burns, 2022: 176-177). This thesis thus sets out to contribute to the understanding of the influence of electoral institutions and ideological inclinations in shaping the legislative behavior of MEPs.

Some of the main challenges the Parliament faces stem from its representative functions and Europe-wide political developments. As the only directly elected body of the Union, its legitimacy can be undermined by the relatively poor turnout in European elections compared to the national ones (Burns, 2022: 186). Concomitantly, the constant rise of non-mainstream or Eurosceptic parties in the EP has reinforced their commitment to wear away the EU's structural elements of governance from within (see, e.g., Klüver & Spoon, 2015; Burns, 2022: 186). The legislative coexistence between mainstream and non-traditional political forces highlights the emergence of a new political landscape. Within this framework, the discussion on the EP's appeal to the greater European electorate has made the institution an excellent laboratory for scrutinizing its elected members' parliamentary behavior and objectives. Given the ascending institutional role of the EP, its ninth term (EP9) marked the onset of a series of new obstacles for the function of the institution.

Most importantly, the 2019 European Parliament elections prompted an unprecedented shift toward fragmentation of the European Parliament (Brack et al., 2024). These elections left the more centrist and traditionally governing EPP and the S&D without a majority in the EP for the first time. This can be regarded as an immediate outcome of the political fragmentation following the electoral triumph of Eurosceptic parties and minor pro-EU

parties in the 2019 European Parliament elections. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit have also contributed to an amalgamation of crises, the so-called polycrisis. The former forced the EP to extend the remote voting system for MEPs and encourage them to work from home (Burns, 2022: 184), while the latter undermined the EU's unity and reallocated the EP seats among the remaining member states (Borragan & Cini, 2022: 418-419). Consequently, these multi-faceted challenges have influenced the fashion in which national parties (NPs) and European party groups (EPGs) have taken decisions regarding voting intentions during EP9 (see, e.g., Brack et al., 2024; Johansson et al., 2022; Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a).

Even though these challenges have not constituted a derailing factor for the effectiveness of legislative procedures in the EP, they have contributed to the emergence of a new political landscape in the EU. In this regard, it is crucial to scrutinize the impact of electoral systems and ideology groupings of MEPs on the defection of MEPs from their respective EPGs during the ninth term of the EP. As analyzed in the literature review, while previous studies have focused on other aspects of this legislative term, some others have scrutinized the effect of electoral institutions before 2019 only. For example, EP politics has long been dominated by compromise and a norm of consensus—even in the ninth term—(Costa & Marié, 2023; Novak et al., 2021). There is, however, little evidence on the impact of electoral systems and ideological shadings on party group cohesion from 2019 onwards and amid the emerging landscape. Thus, it is preeminent to examine the effect of these parameters on defection rates in EP9.

1.5 Disposition

The paper is structured as follows: firstly, the thesis introduces in the literature review the pieces of academic work related to the research topic. Within this section, the reader is equipped with sources about the defection phenomenon of MEPs over time and the special characteristics of the ninth Parliament. Secondly, the paper expands upon the theories interconnected to rational choice institutionalism, which is narrowed to principal-agent theory

and concepts on the behavior of MEPs. Moreover, the main concepts on how institutional and ideological determinants shape legislative choices in the EP are included. Thirdly, the methodology applied in the research is thoroughly elaborated. Specifically, the selection of the quantitative method of secondary data analysis is elaborated. To gain an accurate understanding of the applied method, the choice of material, variables, and units of study are analyzed. Finally, the main segment of the research entails the findings and the discussion on them from an analytical perspective. The main conclusions drawn from the analysis of the findings are going to be discussed in the context of comparison and exemplification.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter of the thesis, the focus lies on the nature of previous research. As researchers have conducted earlier studies on legislative behavior and functions within the domain of the EP, the first two sub-sections give an insight into the related literature. Central to the review are studies examining defection in the EP as well as bodies of literature using similar methodology to examine the effects of electoral systems and ideological groupings. The third sub-section lays stress on pieces of academic work concerning the unique characteristics of the EP's ninth term (2019-2024) in relation to defection rates and the general behavior of parliamentarians. The fourth sub-section underlines the literature gap and paves the way for expanding on the theoretical background. Literature review sets the cornerstone for building hypotheses in connection with theories while providing the reader with valuable input for the research analysis of the examined issue.

2.1 Electoral Systems and Legislative Behavior in the EP

To begin with, electoral institutions have long constituted a core factor determining the legislative behavior and election of parliamentarians in the EP since the early 1990s (Hix et al., 1999: 8-9). Early examples of research into the impact of electoral systems on legislative behavior revealed that proportional (PR) systems with single national lists give some leverage to national parties to exercise power to the selection of MEPs (Norris and Franklin, 1997, in Hix et al., 1999: 8). Other lines of evidence also suggest that MEPs in single-member constituencies, for instance the United Kingdom and Ireland, tend to be more sensitive in promoting domestic issues of their constituents in comparison to the ones elected in PR systems (Bowler and Farrell, 1993, in Hix et al., 1999: 8). Some of the first studies on the issue showed that the structure of electoral systems influences the priorities and actions of MEPs as the former can determine their selection process and agenda.

Previous research findings into electoral institutions and legislative behavior in the EP have postulated that ballot systems can determine MEPs' loyalty to European party groups (Hix, 2002; 2004; Faas, 2002; 2003). More specifically, Hix's research (2004) indicates that national party control over the selection of MEPs in ballot influences the defection rates of an MEP from its EGP. The less authority a national party can exercise over an MEP as a side-effect of the electoral system, for example, in a candidate-centered and large-district system, the less probable it is that an MEP will vote against the EGP, and essentially defect (Hix, 2004: 212). Similarly, it has been found that national party affiliation is a stronger determinant of voting behavior than EP party group membership in the fifth parliamentary term (Faas, 2002: 12-15). It was found that the more party-focused and centralized in candidate selection a system is, the more likely it is to affect the MEPs to defect from their European affiliation group.

In other words, electoral systems significantly influence MEPs' legislative behavior based on party control through the electoral institutions' provisions. Almost every paper that has been written on the issue specifies specific reasoning pathways behind defection rates of MEPs. More concretely, one of the reasons concerns the type of electoral system used in the member state. This view is supported by Hix (2004) and Klüver and Spoon (2015), whose studies clarify that a closed-list PR system with small district magnitude and centralized candidate selection makes it more likely for an MEP to defect from EGPs by emphasizing the importance of policy salience. In a similar vein, Faas (2002) affirmed that electoral system differences at the national level influence defection rates, while closed-list proportional representation negatively affects EPG cohesion. Therefore, it is proved that electoral and institutional constraints —e.g., district magnitude and candidate selection— have an impact on defection rates.

Additionally, another reason for MEPs' defection related to the electoral system is the influence that European party groups use to maintain their cohesion. Prior research suggests that there are specific mechanisms through which party cohesion in the EP is expected to be maintained or disrupted. Hix (2004) not only affirms that EPGs maintain their influence by providing legislative tasks and assignments to MEPs, but he also claims that EPGs promote career advancements in the EU for MEPs to maintain loyalty. Notably, one study by Hix

(2002: 697-698) reports that members of the two large mainstream EPP and S&D did not guarantee specific voting patterns for MEPs between 1999 and 2000. This essentially means that voting behavior is not driven by EP party groups but mostly by their principal-based actions. In this context, one parameter that can assure EGP cohesion is harmony in voting intentions between the national party and its European political family (see, e.g., Hix, 2002: 698-699).

In a similar spirit, studies have researched the role of policy distance between national delegations and their EPGs. It has been found that one of the main reasons for increased defection rates of MEPs from their EPGs is the distance between an NP and its EGP in the European integration dimension and left-right spectrum (Hix, 2004: 212-214). However, it is worth noting that policy-distance-based defection can also be issue-specific and not generalized. For example, the salience of agriculture and regional policies might lead to MEP defection (Faas, 2003). While policy distance has been one of the main defection factors, the issue salience for a national party can influence defection, too.

In a large-scale longitudinal study, Klüver and Spoon (2015: 559-561) supported the argument that when national parties prioritize an issue and when there are ideological differences between national and European affiliations, it becomes increasingly possible to witness MEP defection. This finding places the national party policy preferences in the European political spotlight rather than the European group party preferences, as party competition in the EP seems to be centered on the national parties' choices and policy priorities. MEPs are not disassociated from their NPs, and their behavior is driven by their member states' domestic politics (Klüver & Spoon, 2015: 561). It becomes obvious that the determinants of legislative behavior in the EP are intrinsically associated with national party politics.

Meanwhile, it has been proven empirically that NPs undermine the transnational character of the EP in that way. This has been the case when their policy focus differentiates to the one of their European political family between the second and the fifth terms of the EP (Faas, 2002). In addition to this tendency, defection can be influenced by the incumbency of MEPs and the membership of their respective home states. It is striking that freshmen from

new member states, such as Hungary and Poland, are prone to defect more than incumbents at first, while freshmen from pre-existing member states are inclined to defect less than incumbents (Lindstädt et al., 2012). Nonetheless, the legislative behavior of freshmen tends to come closer to the EPG priorities and senior MEPs in distance to the national party objectives (Lindstädt et al., 2012). Conclusively, the barriers for compliance with EPG lines do not only directly lie in the electoral systems' characteristics, but also in legislative experience and national party dynamics in relation to electoral institutions.

2.2 Cohesion and Defection: Ideological Groupings and Policy Salience

Previous research has demonstrated that defections in the EP emerge from the complexity of interaction between ideological divergence, policy salience, and institutional permissiveness. It has been found that the centrality of ideology across political factions in the EP constitutes a party discipline or defection factor, and thus, it can be expected that specific ideologies and policy salience shape defection. Wider contextual studies revealed that right-wing to far-right MEPs have strong anti-immigration stances stemming from promotion of cultural issues, such as nativism and authoritarianism (McDonnell & Werner, 2018). Even though their consensus on these issues has been a unifying factor for right-wing party groups in the EP, it seems that their divergence on economic policies, welfare state, and other socio-political aspects, such as immigration, leads to fragmented EP group affiliations (McDonnell & Werner, 2018). In addition, Eurosceptic right-wing MEPs tend to reject or abstain on low-salience legislation to signify opposition to EU legitimacy, but they can also vote pragmatically on issues aligned with national interests (Vestergaard, 2021). Conclusively, defection among radical right and far-right forces in the EP can be shaped by Euroscepticism and a sovereigntist approach to numerous issues.

Certainly, the interaction between ideology, cohesion, and policy area seems to become complicated in the far-right to right-wing segment of the EP. Greilinger and Mudde

(2024) further researched EP9 and found that far-right parties in the EP, IDG and ECR, sometimes tend to adopt economically left-wing narrative but their MEPs oppose EU socio-economic mainstream legislation in actual EP voting, such as minimum wages measures or corporate taxation. They proved that voting patterns of MEPs on the right-wing to far-right parties vary significantly, mostly due to national parties' incentives within the European party groups. The findings also revealed that EPG cohesion is at stake or much weaker in socio-economic policy areas and has regional characteristics (e.g., Northern parties tend to vote more market-liberal). Regarding center-right to right-wing party groups, such as EPP and ECR, it is expected to highlight market-based policies while focusing on agricultural or regional policies in the event of a clash between the EU and national interests (Vestergaard, 2021).

For example, right-wing ECR member parties tend to oppose deeper EU integration but would still influence policymaking in EU issues like security, trade, and immigration (Vestergaard, 2021). At the same time, right-wingers would focus on tax cuts and social conservatism in the form of migration restrictiveness and limited regulation (McElroy & Benoit, 2007). The EPP seems to stick to prioritizing EU integration and economic policies within a certain degree of regulatory framework rather than focusing on immigration restriction (McElroy & Benoit, 2007). Klüver and Spoon (2015) found that the probability of an MEP voting against their EPG is increased not only in the event of ideological divergence between national parties and EPGs, but also when the issue is highly salient to the national party. One of their main findings is that there has been consistent salience and distance interaction, even in small ideological gaps in areas of Agriculture, Environment, Social/Employment, and External Trade.

A central theme emerging is that defection in the EP is shaped by the interplay between ideological inclinations, policy salience, and the institutional gravity of the EP in all groups, even the ones on the left. In this spirit, certain EPGs, such as the EPP, show systematic variation in voting patterns on Agriculture, while the center-left S&D group on Employment (Klüver and Spoon, 2015). It has been demonstrated that MEPs are more likely to break with their EPG when national incentives diverge significantly from the group and the issue is highly salient in domestic affairs (Klüver and Spoon, 2015). Left-of-center EPGs,

such as S&D and the Greens/EFA, generally seem to support social protection and environmental legislation even if defection arises when legislative proposals might clash with national economic interests or internal strategies (Greilinger & Mudde, 2024). Conclusively, combining left-leaning economic preferences and EU integration has been pivotal for S&D and the Greens/EFA cohesion.

More cautious than S&D and the Greens, the Left in the EP sits furthest to the left economically by laying stress on advocating higher public spending and high regulation (McElroy & Benoit, 2007). All three of these groups on the left share broadly liberal positions on civil liberties, redistribution, and immigration issues. Their main difference might lie in the pace at which they wish EU integration to occur. In spite of these commonalities among groups in both the right and the left, the differences in behavioral variance can also lead to intra-bloc defection. Behavioral variance is not only attributable to institutional discipline alone but also to partisan control, which EPGs fail to exercise. Policy-area defections may occur even in the event of ideological alignment and salience since MEPs also respond to territorial, electoral, and reputational concerns (Dafydd, 2014). This parameter reframes defection as not solely a by-product of policy distance but also of structurally loose MEPs-EPG linkages defined by ideological proximity.

2.3 Mapping Existing Knowledge of EP9

To date, there are few pieces of academic literature on the ninth term of the EP that still reveal the emergence of several propensities that can be investigated further. One of the most recurring topics that emerged is associated with the 2019 European Parliament election results and the subsequent political fragmentation. According to Brack et al. (2024), the loss of the parliamentary majority by the mainstream center-right and center-left parties led other minor pro-EU parties to obtain an influential role in the Commission's formation and policy-making initiatives. Even though the EPP and S&D parties retained their dominant position in EU politics after the 2019 EP elections, right-wing and centrist alternative coalitions gained influence in certain policy areas. On the other hand, Sebastião (2025) investigated the fashion

in which the rise of populist radical right parties in Europe might have led to a “contagion effect” of right-wing practices, narrative, and instability in the EP. What is particularly interesting about the study is that the emergence of populist right-wing parties and the politicization of migration and other issues have not significantly disrupted the cohesion of EPGs during the ninth EP. In an analysis of eight 2021–2024 European Parliament votes, Greilinger & Mudde (2024) also found that even though far-right parties have the propensity to “talk left,” ID and ECR MEPs ultimately vote significantly right-wing against EU social and workers’ rights.

Therefore, it is vital to examine further how ideological heterogeneity in EPGs occurs and creates weak group discipline. Thus far, previous studies have begun to determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased party cohesion due to emergency decision-making and remote voting procedures between 2020 and 2022, which limited the vote to a show of hands (Brack et al., 2024). It was found that there has been a tendency for augmented cohesion, attributed partially to the increased use of roll call votes in the EP as a response to the need for a remote voting system during the pandemic. During that time, roll-call votes (RCVs) in EP9 offered higher transparency into party discipline and MEP voting behavior (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023b). While most of the main parties in the EP kept their cohesion high, some fluctuations have been observed in relation to specific policy areas (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023b). Thus, it can be argued that pandemic-driven changes affect party cohesion and reveal specific policy voting patterns in the ninth term of the EP.

<i>Table 2.: Count of votes in the EP (2004-2023) (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 15-16)</i>			
<i>EP term</i>	<i>Not Recorded</i>	<i>Recorded</i>	<i>Proportion</i>
<i>EP6 (2004-2009)</i>	23 352	6 086	0.207
<i>EP7 (2009-2014)</i>	21 001	6 638	0.240

<i>EP8 (2014-2019)</i>	22 945	9 893	0.301
<i>EP9 (2019-2023)</i>	8 109	14 425	0.640

As shown on Table 1., the number of recorded votes has been increasingly growing between EP6 and EP8. It is striking that in the ninth EP term the number of recorded votes, attributing mostly to RCVs (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 17), prevailed the number of non-recorded ones for the first time. This prevalence gives an excellent opportunity for further research on voting in the EP (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 15-16). In comparison to previous terms, in which the recorded votes have not been the customary way of voting, the EP9 offers a wide range of descriptive patterns of votes by roll calling even if the roll call voting varies across type of procedure, stage, and policy (see, e.g., Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 20-21).

2.4 The Missing Link in Literature

Drawn by these pieces of academic work on the topic, it can be noted that prior studies have established how a study on the influence of electoral systems on MEP defection can be conducted on pre-2019 EP terms. While other papers mention electoral systems but focus on them peripherally (e.g., Hix, 2004), this thesis makes the electoral systems the central explanatory variable, offering renewed insights into the way they shape defection in the ninth term of the EP. The main contributions of this thesis compared to the existing literature on the EP9 are connected to the institutionalist angle and the variety of independent variables used. In contrast to Sebastião (2024) and Broniecki and Høyland (2023a; 2023b), who conduct longitudinal studies with a special focus on the EP9, the thesis focuses on the electoral features and the effects on ideology and policies on voting behavior in the ninth term, with data between 2019 and 2022, as explained below.

The unique context of the ninth term creates a critical gap that this thesis attempts to address and, at the same time, offers the opportunity to bridge gaps between old

methodological tools and today's political phenomena. Bridging the link between the analysis of electoral systems' effects on legislative behavior and ideological policy salience is not examined in a detailed way for all policy areas in EP9. As revealed in the review of the literature, it is evident that there is a lack of recording defection by policy areas and groupings. All in all, the review of the literature acts as a springboard to adapting methodologies to reframe the post-2019 institutional and parliamentary behavioral shifts and to contextualize the electoral systems and groupings in the event of the 2019 European Parliament elections.

3 Theoretical Framework

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses in the analysis part, a dialogue should be initiated between theoretical expectations and empirical collection of evidence. For this purpose, a synthesis of theories is presented, valid to measure concepts, such as defection and, in general, legislative behavior. In particular, narrowing down political theories from rational choice theories to the two-choice dilemma concept for MEPs seeks to explain and predict the observed phenomenon concerning electoral systems' impact (see, e.g., Wehde et al., 2020: 10-11). Further, the theoretical background related to ideological and policy influences on the legislative behavior of MEPs is presented. In this manner, by displaying themes of MEPs' legislative behavior theories as well as the main ideas on legislative parameters within the framework of legislative decisions, five hypotheses are generated from the testable implications of the theories. Conclusively, the role of theory in this thesis is set to supply the researcher with frameworks within which concepts gain academic significance and provide an interpretation of targeted data (see, e.g., Wehde et al., 2020: 17).

3.1 Rational Choice Institutionalism

To derive testable hypotheses and answer the research questions, the thesis applies rational choice institutionalism (RCI) as a departure point for the theory. According to rational choice theory, various social patterns are interpreted as outcomes of the rational actions of a relatively large number of individuals within a specific deliberately chosen environment (Green & Shapiro, 1994: 16, in Rakner, 1996: 4). The focus on institutions within rational choice theory offers a renewed insight into the impact of institutions on the rational actions of individuals. From this perspective, agent preferences and institutional features are the main determinants of social patterns (Shepsle, 1989: 135, in Rakner, 1996: 7-8). While it might be argued that the role of institutions might constrain actors' sets of actions,

institutions are mainly responsible for providing assurance in conditions of uncertainty (Koelble, 1995: 241, in Rakner, 1996: 7).

The institutionalization of the legislative role of the European Parliament has led to the use of RCI to explain MEPs' voting patterns. Pioneering scholars have argued that the design of political institutions has deliberately stemmed from a "transaction cost approach" (Epstein & O'Halloran, 1999, in Pollack, 2019: 110). This implies that legislators systematically design political institutions to minimize the costs of policy-making procedures. At the same time, RCI predicts that the main determinant for MEPs' voting behavior is not their respective nationality but their ideological or policy groups (Pollack, 2019: 114). The nature of the EP as a "normal parliament" rather than a multinational body offers its parliamentarians a specific set of actions similar to national parliament tools in a supranational context (Pollack, 2019: 114). All in all, it can be expected that MEPs will act predictably and cohesively within a political domain dominated by mainstream competition between parties and individuals.

3.2 Extending Principal Agent Theory to MEP Behavior

Principal-agent analysis in tandem with rational choice theory can provide a robust framework for understanding the voting patterns of MEPs. This approach lays the foundation for elaborating how MEPs act as agents of their national parties—the principals—who delegate their political authority to them to represent their policies and interests within the EP (Delreux & Adriansen, 2019). While rational choice theory suggests that MEPs will behave in manners that prioritize and maximize their own utility, it is crucial for their political substance to balance the preferences of their national parties, their personal political objections, and the influence of EPGs (Delreux & Adriansen, 2019). Through this lens, defection from EPG voting lines can be viewed as a tactical choice as part of electoral systems' and ideology's influence. By scrutinizing these dynamics, institutional features and rational calculations can be considered as determinants that shape the legislative behavior of MEPs, in times of political fragmentation and mobilization.

Another concept applicable to the examination of legislative behavior in the EP is the two-principal dilemma that MEPs face (Hix, 2004). Hix (2004) accentuates that the main goals of MEPs are to win reelection, secure policy goals, and get a higher office. Their decisions and behavior are also governed by two principles: their EPG and NP. While the former formulates concrete European proposals and assigns parliamentary office tasks, the latter highly defines MEPs' reelection prospects and access to national offices and the electorate. What is more, the voting decisions are taken by an MEP based on three parameters (Hix, 2004). The first one is the conflict between the two principals since the MEPs might face conflicting interests and instructions when the EPG and NP oppose a vote. The second parameter has to do with the cost of defection in the sense that MEPs take into account both the cost of defying their national party and their EPG. The last parameter is the expected utility, as the MEPs take into consideration the cost and benefit of defecting from or remaining loyal to either principal.

On an ancillary basis, Hix (2004), in his article, claims that electoral institutions, namely electoral system, district magnitude, and candidate-selection rule, as well as their impact on legislators matter. As a theoretical and empirical aspect, it is conceptualized that party-centered electoral systems encourage increased loyalty to the party leadership, while in candidate-centered ones, candidates have high levels of autonomy from leadership. Regarding district magnitude, small districts expand party control since parliamentarians are more vulnerable to party pressure in internal processes. In contrast, larger districts tend to minimize party control over legislators, as incumbent legislators are able to build personal support within their district's electorate. To a greater extent, centralized selection procedures contribute to party discipline, while decentralized candidate choice weakens party leadership. In conclusion, MEPs tend to promote the equilibrium between EPG and NP interests by calculating defection costs and utility.

3.3 Implications of Other Institutional Parameters

Corpora of research and theories on electoral thresholds have examined the trade-off between political representation and legislative cohesion (Baskaran & da Fonseca, 2016: 117-118). The main theoretical conceptualization of electoral thresholds in proportional representation systems, such as the examined EP electoral systems, lies in the exclusion mechanisms that prevent smaller parties from accessing parliaments (Babeck, 2022: 69-70). Another approach sees thresholds as the minimum support a political party needs to achieve representation in terms of a specific number or percentages of votes (Baskaran & da Fonseca, 2016: 118). In both cases, the establishment of a threshold can affect the institutional role of the represented parties and fractions in parliaments. Conclusively, the application of threshold restricts ballot access and media coverage for minor parties or candidates and influences the dynamics between political actors (Babeck, 2022: 69-70).

Beyond shaping party system fragmentation or dynamics, electoral thresholds can also shape legislative behavior. By addressing Duverger's (1959, in Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017: 618-620) psychological effect, voters and elites under high-threshold conditions could prioritize coordination under a strategic scope which could tend to curb fragmentation. Various analyses of post-communist democracies have shown that higher thresholds drastically reduce legislative party diversity (Moser, 1999, in Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017: 618-620). Findings also corroborate that low thresholds in the context of majority rules can facilitate the election of local candidates running on their own or as part of a small political grouping (Moser, 1999, in Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017: 618-620). Conclusively, members of parliaments that face different levels of institutional constraints may defect when their individual policy preferences diverge from their party line, especially when elected under a candidate-focused PR system (see, e.g., Sieberer, 2006).

At the same time, the impact of the UK withdrawal has been profound in EP's functions and role. First of all, seats reallocation owing to Brexit reshaped the size and the power of EGPs (Bressalini et al., 2021). Alongside the rearrangement of EP's territorial fabric, this had an impact on the allocation of legislative committee members and presidents (Bressalini et al., 2021). Secondly, Brexit's impact on the role of the EP might have been a

driving force for reform. EP led a more political and centralized approach in Brexit negotiations by avoiding the technical and internal decision-making process (Bressalini et al., 2021). Finally, the delayed Brexit created psychological and legal complexities. While 73 UK-elected MEPs held full mandates conditionally, there were “MEPs-in-waiting” from 14 EU states who remained on a basis of suspension until the UK’s formal withdrawal (Fabbrini & Schmidt, 2019). This duality posed challenges that might have affected EP’s functions and the remaining MEPs’ behavior. Therefore, it is worth noting that Brexit’s disintegration impinged EP’s institutional framework by prolonging structural alterations.

3.4 Ideology and Cohesion of the Right-Wing EPGs

Theoretically speaking, the theoretical aspects of ideology have always had an impact on the cohesion of groups in the EP. Especially, cohesion within right-wing populist party groups in the EP is at stake depending on the ideological proximity of their member parties and individual MEPs. As radical right-wing EPGs do not enjoy a clear history of unity and continuation in the EP, conflicting national interests and strains of populist nationalism bring division in the spotlight (McDonell & Werner, 2020a). As a result, it is feasible that the ideological orientation of radical right party groups exacerbates their fragmentation. Their core nativist and anti-elitist principles clash with transnational governance objectives by prioritizing national politics (McDonell & Werner, 2020a). For example, their Eurosceptic tendencies in times of crisis lead to prioritization of national sovereignty and interests over EP cohesion, as happened in the 2008 financial crisis voting dilemmas (McDonell & Werner, 2020a). While mainstream party groups are forming alliances based on thick ideologies, such as conservatism, social democracy, and pro-Europeanism, the radical right populist (RRP) forces are relying on thin-centered populist alliances (Mudde, 2019).

With this in mind, it can theoretically be expected that radical right party groups’ ideological rigidity undermines their unity in EP voting. Voting unity stems from shared policy platforms and objectives among parties and individuals in the EP (Bressalini, 2012). Unlike radical right populists, cohesion in mainstream parties is achieved through alignment

on cross-cutting cleavages (Bressalini, 2012). Despite the alliance of right-wing populists in promoting issues like Euroscepticism and anti-immigration, their unity can be compromised in the event of national or party interests' collision (Mudde, 2019: 25-27). Thus, even though right-wing populists share broad ideological goals in the EP, it can be claimed that the lack of their programmatic integration alongside their nativist and anti-elitist rhetoric will undermine their EGP's cohesion. In contrast, well-established and traditional party groups in the Parliament translate their pro-European and ideological principles into stable alliances under the framework of transnational institutions, such as the EP (see, e.g., Schmitt & Thomassen, 2004; 2009, in Bressalini, 2012).

Additionally, it becomes apparent that new logic patterns of EPG cohesion have been formed since the radical right populist participation in the Parliament, especially since 2014 European elections. According to McDonnell and Werner (2020b), it can be expected that the cohesion of the RRP groups in the EP can be determined by group size. The larger a group is, the more cohesive it tends to be due to greater legislative influence. Along with group size, closely aligned groups in terms of ideology can theoretically overcome size advantages in order to minimize defection and maintain cohesion in voting. Lastly, the engagement of MEPs in a group can be attributed to the national party's ideological alignment with their EPGs. The less engaged NPs and the more newly formed EPGs might face challenges in halting defection among their factions. Therefore, the cohesion of RRP groups is expected to be shaped based on group size and ideological alignment of its members.

3.5 Hypotheses

3.5.1 Hypotheses related to RQ1

On the basis of the theories and previous empirical findings, there are three hypotheses to be tested to reveal the effects of examining three aspects of electoral systems on MEP defection rates. To operationalize the above-mentioned theoretical concepts that imply a set of relationships among electoral institutions, political context, and defection rates, the thesis

relies on testable hypotheses. Generally speaking, the testability of hypotheses is rooted in both empirical and theoretical grounds behind a theoretical concept (Wehde et al., 2020: 14). Regarding rational choice institutionalism and principal-agent theory, EP parliamentarians are expected to act cohesively and rationally. Their main intention is to maximize their utility and to prioritize their reelection or agenda under a given electoral system. The distinction between party-centered and candidate-centered systems facilitates the understanding of the set of institutional frameworks within which political actors act.

In short, it can be argued that a party-centered system would promote MEPs to focus on national party lines to survive politically rather than their respective EPG. Given Hix's extension on this rationale, the first hypothesis is also based on the previous findings on how party-centered and closed-list voting systems tend to strengthen national party control over their MEPs by undermining legislators' loyalty to EPGs on many occasions (Hix, 2004; Faas, 2003). Thus, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: MEPs elected under a party-centered electoral system are more likely to defect from their European party group than MEPs elected under a candidate-centered electoral system.

The second hypothesis stems from the idea that small electoral districts provide an electoral leverage to MEPs and encourage their defection from their EPG. From this perspective, larger constituencies, such as country-wide electoral districts for the EP elections, do not encourage them to act on their national interests to secure career advancement and policy objectives. Some researchers have found that small district magnitude have contributed to MEP defection from their EPGs (Klüver & Spoon, 2015), while others have ascertained that large electoral districts make MEP defection less likely (Hix, 2004). Starting from this evidence, a question arises as to how nation-wide electoral districts tend to affect defection given the wide electorate and issues addressed in such systems. So, the second hypothesis emerges as follows:

H2: MEPs elected in non-nationwide districts are likely to defect from their EPGs more than MEPs from nationwide constituencies.

The last and third hypothesis addresses the parameter of the electoral threshold. As principal-agent theory builds on the idea that the trade-offs between parties and MEPs, MEPs' defection can be expected to be influenced by thresholds of national party and EGP policy distance (Hix, 2004; CDL-AD, 2004). Besides this, it is probable that under high-threshold conditions, MEPs could prioritize intra-party coordination under a strategic scope (Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017). Previous findings have also established that low electoral thresholds make it easier for local and independent candidates to run for office (Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017). Rooted in the strategic promotion of their agenda and reelection, MEPs elected in a low threshold system might be expected to defect to signify non-alignment with EGP and to overcome reelection and national politics constraints. Within this theoretical framework, the third and last hypothesis is the following:

H3: MEPs elected in countries with lower or no electoral thresholds are likely to defect more than in states with higher thresholds.

The third hypothesis frames the assumption that electoral thresholds shape MEPs' tactical incentives by holding sway over the degree of party control and the viability of independent positioning.

3.5.2 Hypotheses related to RQ2

By laying the theoretical and empirical foundations of ideology, policy areas, and MEP defection, two hypotheses are formulated to capture their correlation in the ninth term of the European Parliament. The operationalization of the concepts of ideological inclination and the intra-national issues' salience is tested by developing comprehensive statements. The empirical grounding for the fourth overall hypothesis is laid out in the existing findings in party group cohesions (Hix, 2004; Klüver & Spoon, 2015) and on the behavioral patterns of right-wing populist EPGs (McDonnell & Werner, 2018; 2020a; Mudde, 2019; Grelinger & Mudde, 2024). Previous academic research shows strong indications of right-wing to far-right EPGs displaying lower cohesion compared to other mainstream and traditionally governing ideological groupings. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis emerges as follows:

H4: MEPs belonging to right-wing to far-right ideological groupings are more likely to defect from their EPG majority voting compared to center-right and center-left MEPs.

Additionally, the evidence indicates that defection rates not only vary on the basis of political groupings but also distribute unevenly across different policy domains and the salience of the issue for MEPs and ideology. Right-wing to far-right EPGs have the propensity to defect in areas related to socio-economic issues, while pro-EU centrist groups in agricultural and regional issues, and left-wing EPGs in economic/welfare measures, are in conflict with domestic interests (e.g., Greilinger & Mudde, 2024). The strategic priorities for radical right populists and far-right EPGs and individual MEPs are often high-salience but extensively divergent in issues such as immigration and European integration (McDonnell & Werner, 2018; Mudde, 2019). The intersection of ideological groupings in the EP with voting in specific policy domains will be examined through the following fifth hypothesis:

H5: Right-leaning populist and far-right MEPs are more likely to defect in policy areas related to socio-economic and pro-EU issues.

Lastly, to answer the second research question it is vital to show how significant the interaction between policy salience and ideological inclination has been for defection based on the data examined. In EP9, when an issue is highly salient for national and European parties, even for MEPs, defection has been more likely in specific issues, Greilinger and Mudde (2024) have shown. Given the fact that a complete list for defection across all policy areas is missing from the literature, it is important to examine the correlation between ideological alignment, policy salience, and defection in the ninth term of the EP through the analysis of descriptive statistics.

4 Research Methodology & Material

In this segment of the thesis, the methodological design as well as data preparation and operationalization of the theory are developed in subsections, incorporating some discussion on reliability, validity, and limitations of the study. Notwithstanding that scholars have conducted extensive research on MEPs' voting behavior for years, no single theory or methodology can completely provide a single reasoning for defection, but rather a combination of reasons. From this aspect, the study design adopted in this thesis gives the opportunity to observe the phenomenon in a detailed way and new insights to engage in a theoretical analysis at the end (Bryman, 2016: 71). By using high-quality secondary data from the 'VoteWatch' database for EP9, a special focus on the analysis of the statistical results reveals patterns of interest for further research. An integral part of this process is the assessment of the data employed for the sorts of analysis and the techniques used to find implications for examining variables.

4.1 Research Design

To investigate the impact of electoral systems and ideological parameters on MEP defection rates, the study employs quantitative secondary data analysis. The study design is chosen as it is best suited to exploring the correlation between different variables and to manipulating existing data accordingly. Through quantitative observational research, the combination of descriptive statistics and inferential modeling enables the scrutiny of how institutional factors shape legislative behavior in the unique transnational environment of the European Parliament. A non-experimental and observational approach sets the basis for a naturally occurring correlation between the variables (John, 2018: 268-270). In quantitative data analysis, measuring specific social practices helps identify fine differences between people and quantities by leveraging how data is unaffected by timing and administrators (Bryman, 2016).

Secondary data analysis is a useful research approach offering numerous advantages for understanding complex societal phenomena. One of the primary advantages of using data extracted by other researchers at a large scale is that they can produce statistically significant conclusions (Kelly et al., 2024). By using secondary data, the researchers are able to use high-quality and cross-country data, which can make provision for a broader and more robust analysis of an examining topic. This strength of the method facilitates exploring how MEPs defect in different institutional settings across member states. In addition, the employment of secondary data limits the time-consuming process of gathering new data while it offers trustworthy information (Kelly et al., 2024). These benefits make secondary data suitable for studying recent trends in legislative behavior in the EP.

One of the benefits of this approach is that defection goes through a quantification assessment. In other words, defection rates are measured practically only on the basis of the rollcall voting system with data extracted from the VoteWatch database. The roll-call votes (RCVs) are recorded and published in official minutes and were the main way of voting during the first three years of the ninth EP term (European Parliament, 2025). This voting system keeps a record of voting decisions of all MEPs (Yes, No, Abstain, and others) and has been a valuable tool to get an insight into the voting process in the EP (see, e.g., Klüver & Spoon, 2015: 556; Hix, 2004: 207). To measure defection, it is important to compare the votes of individual MEPs with the vote decision of the majority of their EGP, which the MEP belongs to, through RCVs (see, e.g., Klüver & Spoon, 2015: 556). In case an MEP has voted against the majority of their EGP, their voting choice is coded as a defection from their EGP. In this study, merging 'Abstain' and 'No' votes as defection in the event an EGP votes 'Yes' in a vote. This choice is crucial to differentiate the strategic choice of an MEP to be absent from a particular vote and includes abstentions as a negative vote (Hix, 2004: 8). What is important to extract useful information is the high proportion of RCVs which means that the sample is more representative as in the ninth EP term compared to previous ones (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 8-9).

From another theoretical perspective, roll calls can be viewed as a disciplining tool for either the national party or the European party leadership to employ in order to maximize the votes for specific legislation (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 8-9). The transparency of the roll

call voting systems can also be seen as a record of votes for a particular position of the party or an individual MEP (Broniecki & Høyland, 2023a: 8-9). According to EP's rules, a roll call vote must normally be taken if requested by a political group or by at least 5% of all members (European Parliament, 2025). In fact, there is a good reason for politically motivated plans to call for roll call voting since they affect party cohesion and might be part of strategy (Faas, 2002: 12-13; Brack et al., 2024: 8). Nonetheless, it should be noted that not all votes are roll calls, as indicated on Table 1., and RCVs should be seen as elements of coalition building or steps during one stage of a longer decision-making process (see, e.g., Brack et al., 2024).

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis is a research method that involves the use of computational tools and statistical analysis programs, such as RStudio, to allow the researcher the collection and analysis of data (Jensen, 2018: 306). The quantitative method is employed to analyze data, leading to greater generalizations about the empirical world (John, 2018: 255). In the examining case, quantitative research offers the researcher the opportunity to quantify a phenomenon to reveal existing patterns (John, 2018: 255-256). The goal of quantitative data analysis through RStudio is to provide an in-depth understanding of the data and to deduce a model of causation between the tested variables, as explained below.

Quantitative data analysis has several advantages as a research method. It allows for a detailed and nuanced analysis of quantitative data in time and detail (Kelly et al., 2024: 616). Besides saving time, secondary data analysis maximizes scientific knowledge through meta-analysis of the existing data with a focus on revealing and quantifying specific patterns in socio-political phenomena (Kelly et al., 2024: 616). The research orientation of a secondary analysis approach to data leads researchers to employ research techniques through statistical testing. As a result, quantitative analysis of existing data offers assurance that the data is collected in a precise way and accurate outcomes for generalizability (Kelly et al., 2024: 616). In that way, the researcher is enabled to focus on extracting information from and researching a set of trustworthy data relevant to their field of study.

4.3 Material & Sample

The material consists of Hix's VoteWatch database (Hix et al., 2022). The choice of this type of material is associated with the research objective to conduct a quantitative study of the voting behavior of the MEPs (see, e.g., Hix et al., 2005; Klüver & Spoon, 2015; Koop et al., 2018). The dataset gives a comprehensive set of information regarding MEPs' name, national party affiliation, and their membership in European party groups. Apart from this, the VoteWatch database provides the researcher with details concerning the EP's voting procedures and policy areas, the responsible committee, and the sponsoring political group.

The unit of analysis in this study is the individual MEP and their voting history, as the main research aim is to examine how electoral systems influence defection rates at the level of the legislator. Each MEP's voting record as registered in the VoteWatch database, the electoral system elements, and ideological grouping with policy areas are included in the R script in order to test the hypotheses. At this point, it is noteworthy to mention that the database includes only data between the years 2019 and 2022, after which date it ceased operating. Despite the limitations of the timeframe, the database allows researchers to focus on the individual MEP serving during the ninth term of the EP as the unit of analysis for this research. Thus, the dependent variable is measured on the basis of the personal choices of the MEP in contrast to the EGP majority vote.

MEPs in the ninth term of the EP are elected with a five-year term from 2019 and 2024 and were elected on 23-26 May 2019 (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020). Information and data for the electoral systems and changes before and after 2019 EP elections are extracted by the EP report of Oelbermann and Pukelsheim (2020) and are shown on Table 2. below. The total number of MEPs during the ninth term changed before and after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020). The allocation of seats after Brexit was adjusted to 705 MEPs, while a total of 751 seats were allocated among member states before Brexit. For the apportionment of seats among parties in each member state, nine different methods were enforced, but they have been coded into three

categories to facilitate the research for RQ1: candidate-centered for open list and single transferable vote systems, party-centered for closed list and mixed for semi-open list electoral systems.

Table 3.: European Parliament electoral systems in each member state in 2019 (Oelbermann & Pukelsheim, 2020)

Country	Electoral Districts	Electoral System	Threshold	Seats (before Brexit)	Seats (after Brexit)
Austria	1 nation-wide	OL - CC	4%	18	19
Belgium	3 constituencies (Dutch EC12 seats, French EC 8 seats, German LC 1 seat)	OL (choice between party lists or PV) - CC	None	21	21
Bulgaria	1 nation-wide	OL (with PV) - CC	5.7%	17	17
Croatia	1 nation-wide	SOL - Mixed	5%	11	12
Cyprus	1 nation-wide	OL (with 1-2 PVs) - CC	1.8%	6	6
Czech Republic	1 nation-wide	OL (with two PVs) - CC	5%	21	21
Denmark	1 nation-wide	OL (with one PV) - CC	None	13	14
Estonia	1 nation-wide	OL (with PVs) - CC	None	6	7
Finland	1 nation-wide	OL - CC	None	13	14
France	1 nation-wide	CL - PC	5%	74	79
Germany	1 nation-wide	OL (with one PV) - CC	None	96	96

Greece	1 nation-wide	OL (with four PVs) - CC	3%	21	21
Hungary	1 nation-wide	CL - PC	5%	21	21
Ireland	3 constituencies (Dublin 3 seats, Midlands 2 seats, South 3 seats)	STV - CC	None	11	13
Italy	5 constituencies (largest 20 seats — smallest 15 seats)	OL - CC	4%	73	76
Latvia	1 nation-wide	SOL - Mixed	5%	8	8
Lithuania	1 nation-wide	OL - CC	5%	11	11
Luxembourg	1 nation-wide	OL - CC	None	6	6
Malta	1 nation-wide	STV - CC	None	6	6
Netherlands	1 nation-wide	OL (with one PV) - CC	None (5% de facto)	26	29
Poland	13 constituencies (largest 13 seats – smallest 1 seat)	OL - CC	5%	51	52
Portugal	1 nation-wide	SOL - Mixed	None	21	21
Romania	1 nation-wide	CL - PC	5%	32	33
Slovakia	1 nation-wide	OL - CC	5%	13	14
Slovenia	1 nation-wide	OL - CC	4%	8	8
Spain	1 nation-wide	CL - PC	None	54	59

Sweden	1 nation-wide	SOL - Mixed	4%	20	21
United Kingdom	13 constituencies (largest 10 seats, smallest 3 seats)	CL – PC (STV - CC in NI)	None	73	0

Notes: "PV" = Preferential Vote, "CC" = Candidate-Centered, "PC" = Party-Centered, "CL" = Closed List, "OL" = Open List, "SOM" = Semi-Open List, "STV" = Single Transferable Vote, "NI" = Northern Ireland, For Belgium: "EC" = Electoral College and "LC" = Language Community

4.4 Variables

Stemming from RQ1, the dependent variable is recorded as the defection of an MEP from their European party group and is binary. In other words, if the majority of a party group voted yes, an MEP is regarded as having defected from the group in a specific vote if they have voted against. The dependent variable is binary as to whether an MEP defected in a given vote [1 = defection, 0 = voted alongside party group]. This categorization excludes absence and other types of voting records reported on the VoteWatch codebook, as the focus lies exclusively on the ‘yes’, ‘no’, and ‘abstain’ votes. On the other hand, the independent variables constitute the cause that is fluctuated to observe its effect on the dependent variable, namely, in MEPs’ defection.

More specifically, the independent variables related to RQ1 are three: I. Electoral system’s center of gravity (party- or candidate-centered systems), II. Electoral constituency magnitude (nation-wide versus non-nation-wide), III. Electoral Thresholds. The first one is coded as a categorical variable treated as a nominal variable [candidate-centered/open list/STV, mixed/semi-open list, party-centered/closed-list]. Similarly, the electoral district magnitude is coded as a categorical or dummy variable to simplify the analysis and test whether the division of member states into different constituencies affects MEP behavior [0 = nationwide constituency/single electoral district, non-nationwide constituency, 1 = country split into two or more electoral districts]. Based on Table 3., there are five member states with multiple electoral districts, while 23 countries constitute a single electoral district. Lastly, a

continuous independent variable is the electoral threshold, which can vary. The values are the following: none (10 countries), 1.8% (Cyprus), 3% (Greece), 4% (Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden), and 5% (10 countries) (see, e.g., Table 2.).

Regarding RQ2, the dependent variable remains the same and is recorded as the defection of an MEP from their European party group. In contrast to defection, which is binary, the main explanatory variables include the EPG membership, which is a categorical one as well as the standardized policy areas as coded in the database, which are both categorical due to the variance in qualitative non-numerical characteristics. Besides inferring statistical analysis through a logistic regression model, categorical variables are employed to examine the main effects of non-numeric structure on defection by scrutinizing the results of descriptive statistics. To assess correlations and tangible effects, regression coefficients and their significance will be presented below, along with the main findings, which will be analyzed on the basis of descriptive statistics produced to ensure reproducibility.

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses in RStudio, the analysis should be initiated by preparing and manipulating the dataset. The VoteWatch data are filtered to include RCVs only and to exclude abstentions and absences in the RCVs. By adding an additional database on electoral systems under which MEPs have been elected, it is ensured that the data is well-structured and provides clear coding. To simplify coding, the dependent variable, defection, is operationalized as binary [1 = MEP voted against EPG majority; 0 = voted with EPG majority]. The independent variables of RQ1 are also operationalized in the following manner: I. electoral system type [candidate-centered/open-list/STV; mixed/semi-open list; party-centered/closed-list], II. district magnitude [binary: 0 = nationwide; 1 = non-nationwide], and III. electoral threshold [continuous: 0% to 5%]. The control variables used (incumbency, post-Brexit seat allocation, and EGP belongingness) are added to account for confounding effects. For RQ2, the qualitative grouping categorizes ideological groups and policy areas in non-numerical order by following the VoteWatch database classification and naming (see, Appendix 2. for access to the data).

For hypothesis testing, three different models and approaches should be run to test the five hypotheses. To test the first three hypotheses (RQ1), linear regression models are

employed and run in RStudio working space. The dependent variable is the binary defection indicator, while the independent variables are the electoral system characteristics. By conducting linear regressions, the probability of a phenomenon as phrased in the hypotheses is assessed. For the last two hypotheses (RQ2), descriptive statistical analysis, along with interaction models between the independent and dependent variables, is primarily used to compare defection rates among EPGs and policy areas and visualize the defection rates from different scopes.

4.5 Use of Theory

As the study is dominated by elements of theory-confirming research, the thesis adopts a deductive approach to theoretical concepts. The use of rational choice institutionalism, principal agent theory, and other theoretical frameworks on ideology and policy salience are well-established theoretical frameworks that posit significant cornerstones in the deduction line. Following that line, the five hypotheses are explicitly deduced by the theories/empirical findings and frame the operationalization of the of variables. This reflects the linear sequence of deduction: theory → hypotheses → data collection → empirical testing → confirmation/revision of theory (Bryman, 2016: 24-26). Nonetheless, the study design acknowledges potential deviations from pure deduction. By mirroring the iterative nature of real-world research, the thesis incorporates inductive reflections as the theory-testing design remains open to revision in case the empirical data debunk or reframe existing frameworks (see, e.g., Bryman, 2016: 26-27).

4.6 Validity, Reliability & Limitations

In this subsection, some remarks are made concerning validity, reliability, and limitations of the chosen methodology. Regarding validity, the measurement tools used to assess the intended concept can ensure the accuracy and predictability of MEP defection in

EP9 (Bryman, 2016). The thesis employed quantitative analysis of RCVs to ensure consistency by comparing individual MEP votes against their EGP majority. Internal validity is supported by the causal relationships between independent and dependent variables as emerged in the statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, subjective interpretation is minimized by gauging the RCVs quantitatively. Controlling for confounders to specify the effect of electoral rules as well as the theory-based hypotheses ensures certain aspects of internal validity, too (Bryman, 2016). This safety net of internal validity can answer the question as to whether the independent variable can be at least partially responsible for the observed variation in the dependent variable (see, e.g., Bryman, 2016).

External validity projects how generalizable the results can be beyond EP9 or under other settings. Given the context-specific factors, such as COVID-19 impact and the extensive use of RCVs, it becomes challenging to make comparisons to different terms of the Parliament (see, Table 1.). In addition, sample constraints constitute one of the main limitations for external validity. The project ‘VoteWatch’, which recorded the used voting data, ceased operations in 2022. The tenure of EP9 legislators spans from 2019 to 2024. Yet no other data for EP9 between 2022 and 2024 was employed to avoid discrepancies between different categorizations of votes and codebooks. As a result, the extracted data are limited between 2019 and 2022, which still provides valuable voting records for analysis of EP9. While this does not lead to skewing the results, it might have implications for generalizability and uniform comparisons between the results for the ninth term of the EP in total (Bryman, 2016). These limitations are counter-balanced by sensitivity analysis and theory confirmation through the causal interpretation of the results governed by non-random institutional variation (Bryman, 2016).

Generally speaking, questioning reliability concerns whether the results of a study can be reproduced (Bryman, 2016). In the context of the thesis, reliability is vital to ensure that the measurements of MEP defection and electoral system effects are produced in a consistent and repeated manner. The stability of the study’s operationalization based on the RCVs and the strict definition of variables ensures that coding rules are transparent across all observations. Thanks to the availability of VoteWatch data online, other researchers are able to replicate the analysis by using the same dataset and applying a similar methodology if

needed. At a later stage, hypothesis testing as well as the robustness tests ensure predictability and stability of the study (Bryman, 2016). All in all, the thesis lays stress on replicability by using accessible data and a transparent set of methodologies. Simultaneously, the methodology does not make provision for fluctuations in interpreting the results by using objective voting records.

4.7 Epistemological & Ontological Considerations

In this thesis, reality is detached by the researcher's observations and personal opinions, as electoral systems, ideology, and legislative behavior in the EP are part of an untouched objective reality. Based on this, the ontological position of this paper can be characterized as foundationalist/objectivism since the political world of the EP exists independently of the researcher's knowledge of it (Furlong & Marsh, 2018: 185, 193). This perspective allows for the identification of patterns regarded as objective that reflect the relationship between the data, such as the effects of electoral systems on MEP defection rates. The choice of quantitative secondary data analysis aligns with the idea of analyzing large-scale data to identify causal mechanisms to test hypotheses generated by theories (Furlong & Marsh, 2018: 193-194). Consequently, the assumption of an objective reality aligns with the foundationalist ontological perspective of this study, which also implies a positive epistemological consideration.

Certainly, the positivist epistemology serves the scientific tradition of examining data to extract information concerning regular relationship between social phenomena (Furlong & Marsh, 2018: 194). In this process, there are no deep structures that cannot be directly observable and noticeable (Furlong & Marsh, 2018: 194). This can also be seen as part of the positivist notion that natural and social science are broadly analogous since the theory, through hypotheses, can be tested by direct observation (Furlong & Marsh, 2018: 194). Objectivity and value-free research are core elements of positivism and lead to the pursuit of empirical questions to make causal statements and connections (Furlong & Marsh, 2018: 194). The employment of linear regression models underpins the commitment of the study to

identify causal patterns. In that way, prioritizing empirical observation, for instance roll-call votes, to derive generalizable conclusions becomes the objective of the study.

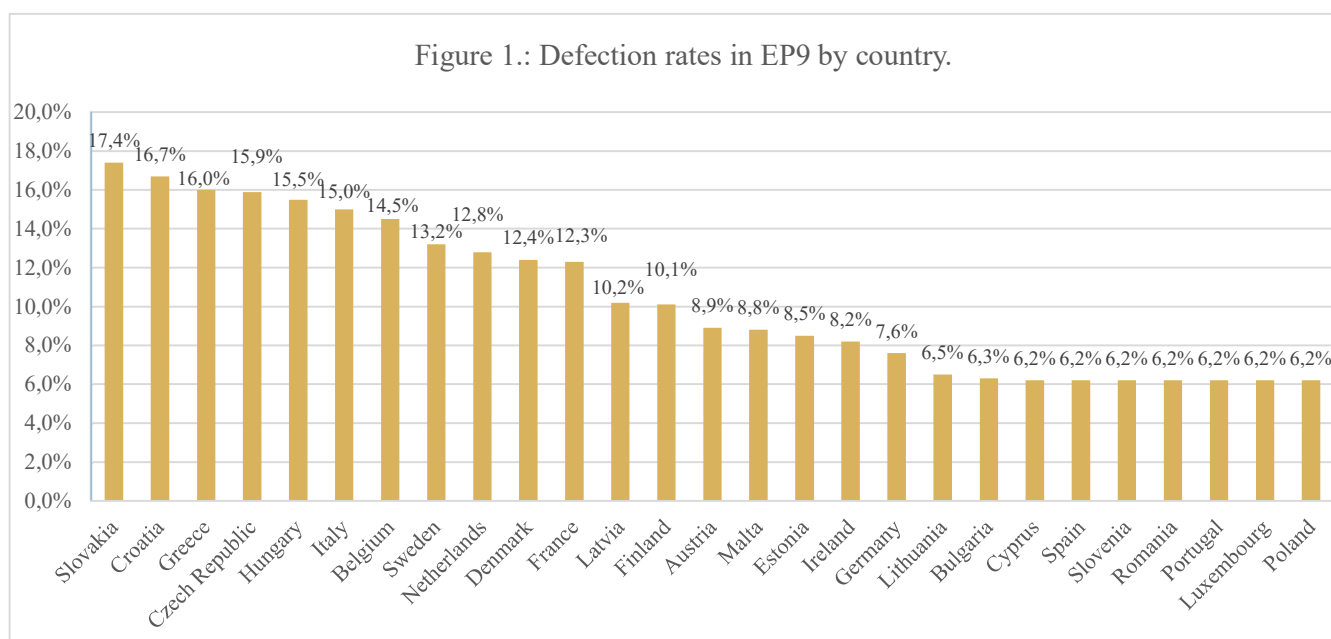
5 Results

In this section, the empirical tests of different models and variables are outlined, commencing with general descriptive data analysis (see also Appendix 1. for detailed tables). The general patterns of MEP defection from their EGP are presented in the first subsection, while the effects of electoral systems, ideological groupings, and policy areas follow. Defection in the EP is categorized by party group, country, policy area, and committee. The results then go into a broad discussion, including all findings through regressions. Many findings are based on tables attached in Appendix 1.

5.1 General Empirical Findings

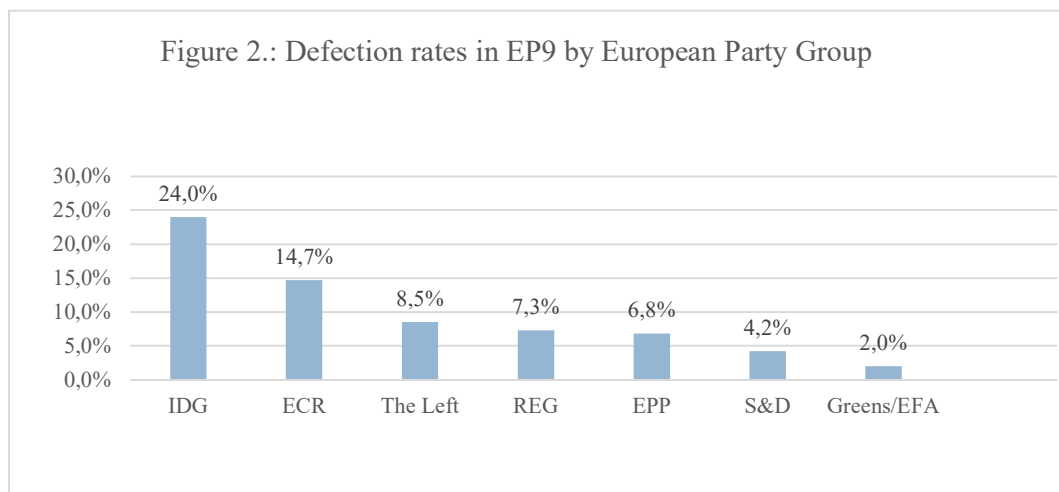
5.1.1 Defection by Country

The first set of analyses outlines how defection rates have evolved during EP9. Results of previous studies covering older terms of the EP have shown that party group cohesion has



always been relatively high (Faas, 2003: 853-854). In continuation with these findings, but conversely, defection rates have been relatively low in EP9 with significant fluctuations between various countries (see, Figure 1.). MEPs from different member states seem to defect with scores from around 3% (Poland and Luxembourg) to almost 17.5% (Slovakia and Greece). What is interesting about the variety of defection rates is that there is no clear uniformity among geographically, culturally, and politically similar member states, as well as Eurosceptic ones. It is worth noting that the first five countries with the highest defection rates are all Eastern and Southern European with medium or low population size (Slovakia, Croatia, Greece, the Czech Republic, and Hungary). A mid-range category encompasses different countries, such as Italy, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands, where total defection rates are around 14%. On the other hand, Germany, Lithuania, and Poland fall in the category with the low defection rates, ranging from 6% to 8%.

5.1.2 Defection by European Political Group



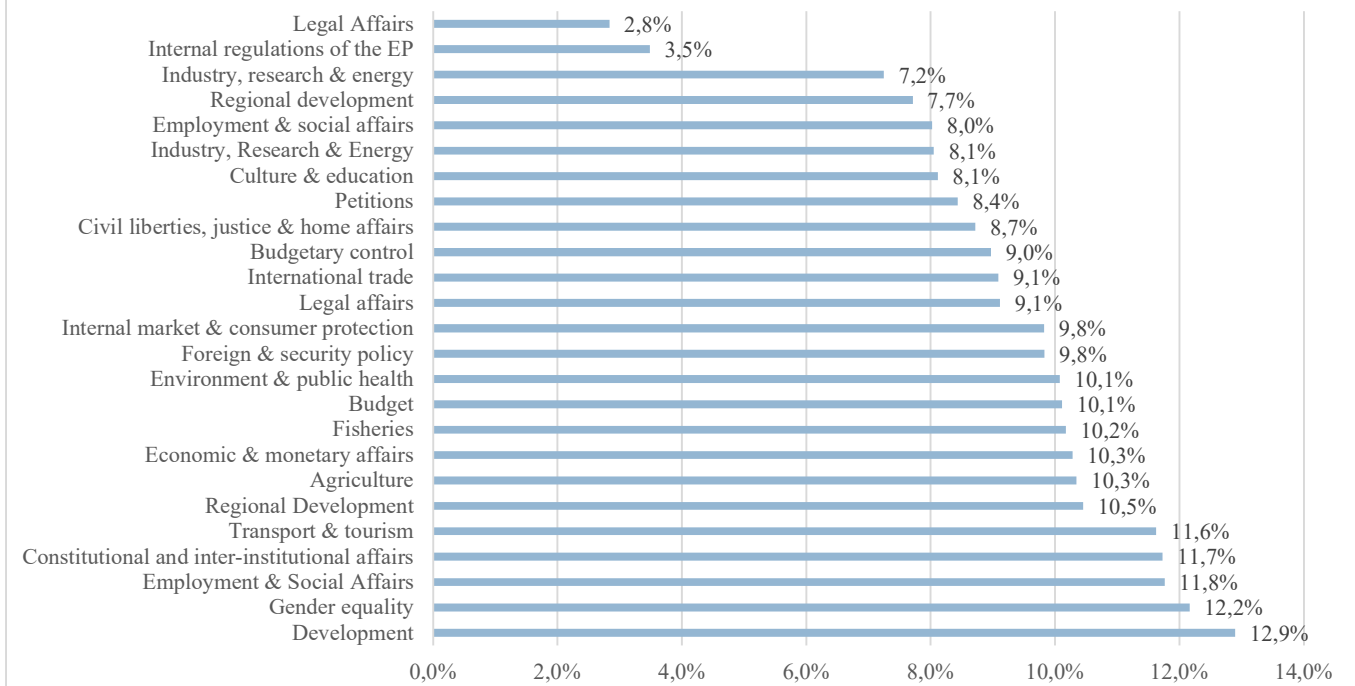
The defection rates across European party groups reveal noteworthy variations. Figure 2. illustrates that the percentages of defection among political groups highlight significant variation across the aisles of the Parliament. As anticipated, EPGs on the right, such as Identity and Democracy Group (IDG) and European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), exhibit the highest defection rates, indicating a loose alignment of their MEPs with their party

lines. More specifically, defection rates in both groups are 24% and ~15%, respectively. Moving to the center and the left, more mainstream groups in the EP domain, like The Left and Renew Europe Group (REG) demonstrate comparatively lower defection rates, between 7% and 8.5%, which suggests moderate level of defection. The main center-right force of EPP has even lower defections on 6,8%. The center-left groups, S&D and Greens/EFA, present the lowest defection rates overall, 4.2% and 2% respectively, implying strong internal unity in these groups.

The chart provides a simple insight into the internal dynamics and stability of the larger EPGs during the ninth term of Parliament. High defection in IDG signifies the variation in internal strategy and conflicting ideological and policy objectives of its members. ECR's high defection rate could be attributed to similar challenges rooted in its internal absence of cohesion. Lack of homogeneity is also noted among the Left and REG members but in lower rates than the right-wing to far-right parliamentary groups. In contrast, the two most politically mainstream forces in the EP, namely the EPP and S&D, show exceptionally disciplined voting blocks that indicate their internal cohesion. To even lesser extent, the Greens/EFA group reflects the most cohesive EPG in EP9. In total, the data underscores the variations on defection rates among EPGs during the ninth term, which will be analyzed later in correlation with policy areas other examining parameters.

5.1.3 Defection by Policy Area and Committee

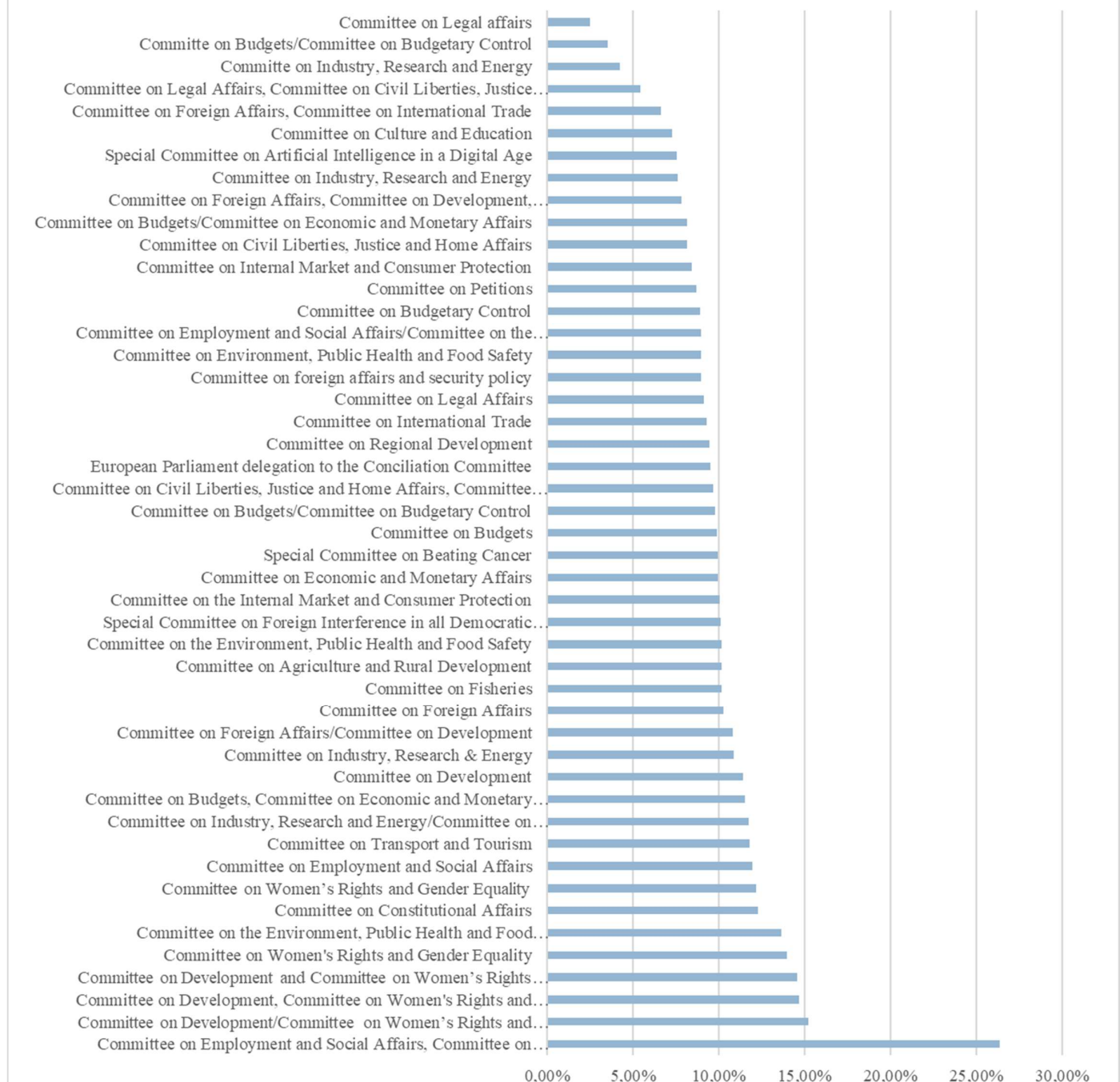
Figure 3.: Defection rates in EP9 by Policy Area



The data stemming from the horizontal bar chart in Figure 3. reveals how voting patterns regarding parliamentary cohesion have unfolded across various policy domains. What emerges is that procedural and bureaucratic matters, such as Legal Affairs and Internal Regulation of the EP, have the lowest defection rates at 2.8% and 3.5%. Cohesive harmonization is disrupted by more divisive issues, like Industry, Trade, Market, Foreign Policy, and Regional Development, which show moderate defection rates (between 7% and 10%), even though they remain low. On the other hand, defection rates increase to over 10% in areas like Gender Equality, Development, and Social Affairs. Notably, Fisheries, Regional Development, and Agriculture sectors, in which defection could be expected to be augmented due to tensions between national and EU policies, remain around 10%. Higher levels of dissent are noted in areas like Transport, Employment, Gender Equality, and Constitutional affairs, in which defection rises to around 12%. Finally, the challenging domain for European

politics, Development tops the list at almost 13%. Overall, the data emphasizes that technical and economic issues maintain defection low, while financial resource allocation and social agenda issues tend to increase it.

Figure 4.: Defection Rates in EP9 by Committee Responsible.



On a similar vein, Figure 4. represents the varying rates of defection across legislative voting promoted through different committees within the EP. The committees are ordered from the lowest to the highest defection rates and, on many occasions, they overlap since legislation might be initiated and submitted by various committees depending on the issue. Based on the chart, the voting process submitted by the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee in Industry and Energy have the lowest defection rates among EPGs (2.5% and 3.5%, respectively). In the middle range, defection rates mostly fluctuate between 7% and 12% over divisive issues, such climate policies, fisheries, budgets, economic affairs, and international trade agreements. In contrast, Committees on Employment, Gender Equality, and Women's Rights present higher defection within the range of 11% and 14%, while the joint legislation by Development and Women's Rights Committees has the highest defection rates at 26.4%.

Meanwhile, legislative proposals by joint committees, for example Employment and Social Affairs/Transport, have shown a wide range of defection rates. Nonetheless, it can be argued that voting for legislation submitted by overlapping committees often experience higher defection rates or at least moderate ones. Issues that may have conflicting priorities and socio-political interests, such as labor mobility and infrastructure, might amplify defection risks as MEPs prioritize their constituents' interests rather than their EPG's. Overlapping committees' legislation is responsible for average defection rates, for instance Energy/Committee on Transport and Tourism (9% defection), and on the Committee on Development/Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (9.3%). Higher rates of defection are demonstrative on legislation coming from the Committee on Foreign Affairs/Committee on Development (9.9% defection rate), as well as from the Committee on Budgets/Committee on Budgetary Control (10.2%). Conclusively, defections seem to peak in policy areas managed by committees in which sovereignty and moral values might intersect, while technocratic and technical issues requiring experts' opinions remain less divisive.

5.1.4 Defection by European Party Groups and Policy Areas

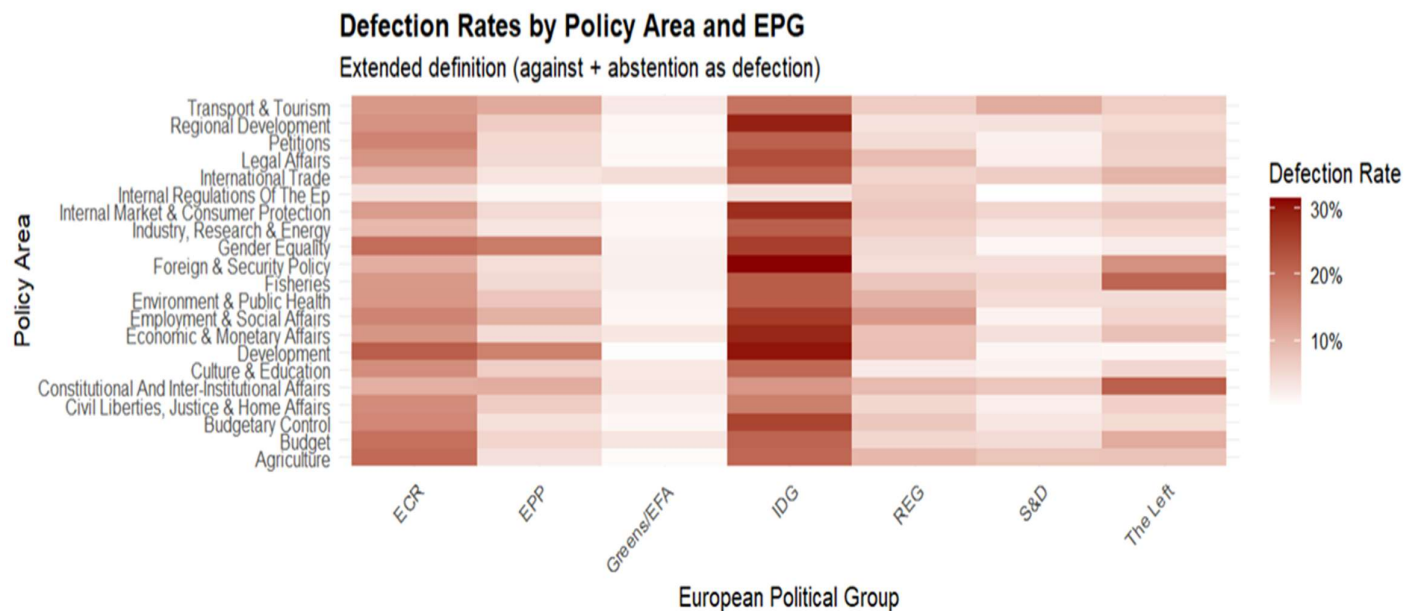


Figure 5.: Heatmap depicting Defection Rates by Policy Areas and European Party Groups in EP9.

The heatmap provides a comprehensive table of all possible combinations of EPGs and policy areas as they have been unfolded in the ninth term of the EP (see Appendix 1. For detailed percentages and absolute vote numbers). Commencing from the group furthest to the right, IDG demonstrates the highest defection rates among all political groupings, with a distinct peak of 31.4% in Foreign and Security Policy area. Internal disagreements seem to be prominent in various areas in which defection exceeds 20% among its MEPs. These are Development, Economic Affairs, Internal Market, Gender Equality, Budget, Legal Affairs, Fisheries, Environment and Public Health. Lower defection rates within the group are detected in Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Constitutional Affairs, and Transport (14-19%). The lowest defect rate in the ID group is noted in the Internal Regulations of the EP with almost 4%. IDG's high defection in general and specifically in key areas of broad Union policies signals its internal rigidity and its non-alignment with a centralized political party with pan-European objectives and stances.

The right-wing ECR group shows consistently high defection rates but significantly lower than the far-right IDG. More specifically, the highest defection rates fluctuate between 19 and 22% in the Development, Gender Equality, Agriculture, and Budget areas. Defection rates are between 9% and 16% in all other areas besides Internal EP regulations, which is at 4%. Notably, the defection patterns in this group show less variation compared to IDG but still higher defection in crucial policy areas, such as Fisheries, Employment, Civil Liberties, Budget, etc., in comparison to other more pro-EU and centrist EPGs. While the ECR group presents a less cohesive parliamentary team in contrast to the mainstream governing groups of the Parliament, the results suggest that there is ideological consistency even in dissent behavior among its MEPs.

As the main center-right mainstream parliamentary group, the EPP grouping maintains relatively low defection rates. The EPP group, as the heavyweight of the EP, shows disciplined voting behavior during the ninth term of the EP. The main finding is that rebellion within the group has mainly been spotted in culturally divisive issues. For instance, the highest defection rate is found in the policy area of Gender Equality (17.5%), even if this percentage is quite low compared to the EPGs on the right of the spectrum. In the area of Development, it is the group's second-highest defection rate, which signifies division of its MEPs in growth and regional development issues. In the middle, issues like Transport, Constitutional and Social Affairs, Regional Development, and Culture/Education are lying in the middle of defection rates (6%-11.5%). Significantly low rates of defection (<5.5%) are noted in all other areas of Common Market and Economic Policies as well as technical issues, which highlight the group's procedural and pro-EU unity.

The main centrist and liberal group of the EP, Renew Europe (REG), displays a similar rate of average defection to EPP but in different policy areas. In particular, Employment and Social Affairs as well as Environment and Public Health policy areas demonstrate the highest defection rates within this group, almost 14% and 10%, respectively. All other policy domains remain lower than 10%, but in contrast to the groupings from the right and the left the lowest defection rates are not detected in the Internal Regulations in the EP voting records. REG's members of Parliament seem to show strong free-trade and cultural consensus since their dissent is limited to issues of fiscal and climate and social policy issues.

These patterns place REG as a heterogeneous group where dissent is limited to specific issues while maintaining discipline in core issues, like market- and culture-liberal policies.

Moving to the left, the center-left S&D group demonstrates discipline in voting patterns way below the average of its groups on the right-wing of the political spectrum. Except for the Transport and Tourism sector, where defection is almost 11%, the defection rate in other sectors is relatively low, not exceeding 8%. The S&D's confirmed consistent cohesion is highlighted by their scores in policy domains, such as Employment/Social Affairs, Agriculture, Civil Liberties, Economic Affairs, and Budget, which have been highly divisive for the groups as mentioned earlier. It is noteworthy that the group's cohesion in contentious areas like Gender Equality and Development maintains near-total discipline. The data portrays the primary center-left grouping in the EP as one of the most cohesive voting blocs, with defection rates 50-75% lower than its ideological neighbors and opponents.

In a similar vein, the Greens/EFA have proved to be the most cohesive group for this parliamentary term. Their highest dissent is spotted in the International Trade area at 4.6%. In total, the average defection of this group is 79% below the EP average. This is demonstrated by the fact that discipline is widespread in all ranges of policy areas—from Legal Affairs to Budget—in which defection percentages fluctuate between 1% and 3.5% only. It is worth noting that internal consensus is achieved almost unanimously in areas like Agriculture and Development, within which defection rates are lower than 1%. All in all, it can be argued that the Greens/EFA show strong internal unity in areas crucial to their progressive and environmental agenda (e.g., Agriculture and Development) while confirming robotic discipline across all areas.

Lastly, the group further to the left in EP9—the so-called The Left (or GUE/NGL until 2021)—demonstrates higher defection compared to the other left-leaning and centrist groups mentioned above, but still less than the ones on the right. Particularly, the swings between different areas indicate a fractured political alignment within the Left. The highest defection rates are between 14 and 21% which are noted in Constitutional Affairs, Fisheries, and Foreign/Security Policy. Other areas, such as International Trade, Economic Affairs, Internal Market, and Agriculture, show defection rates that fluctuate between 6% and 11%.

Even lower defection rates are demonstrated in the policy domain in which the group's progressive flank sets its priorities. These areas are Development, Gender Equality, Environment, and Public Health (1%-5%). The voting patterns depict a left coalition of members who struggle to bring together different factions, resulting in defection rates that are twice as high as S&D and the Greens but still significantly lower than IDG and ECR.

In summary, it is important to note that the data disclosed a clear ideological spectrum of MEPs' defection from their EPGs' majority voting patterns (see, Appendix 1., Table 10.). The policy area with the highest divisive difference is Development, which varies dramatically from 0.4% (Greens/EFA) to 30.3% (IDG). This outcome could reflect the fundamental ideological divide in the EP among the various emerging and traditional political groupings. Similarly, Constitutional and Institutional Affairs indicate a wide range of dissent which fluctuates from 3.2% (Greens/EFA) to 21.4% (The Left). The single highest defection score (31.2%) is attributed to the Foreign and Security Policy area by IDG, underlining ideological divide on the far-right regarding collective security and foreign affairs framework. Economic policy areas also trigger significant defection among the groups on the right (IDG and ECR). These high-defection clusters share two main elements: 1. They all involve questions on sovereignty, resource allocation, and issues based on ideological inclination, and 2. There is at least one fracture policy domain in all political groupings, besides the Greens, in which defection exceeded 10%. It is apparent that ideologically charged policies prompted extreme and average defection rates, which reveal segmented groupings in integration issues, among others, across national and federalist factions and newer and traditional EPGs.

On the other hand, various policy areas demonstrate remarkable cross-group cohesion. In this respect, technical and procedural issues, such as EP's Internal Regulations, show the lowest defection with all groups maintaining <5% dissent. The Culture and Education area maintains low rebellion from MEPs across the spectrum of the EP, alongside Budgetary Control (except for IDG). The governing and more centrist EPGs (EPP and S&D) and the Greens/EFA developed significant convergence on environmental policy initiatives, which suggests a cross-ideological climate consensus in EP9. Conclusively, these low-defection areas typically involve technical procedural voting, non-partisan cultural matters, or policies where EU competence seems to be well-established. Within these policy domains, average

defection rates remained 50-70% below the parliamentary mean as an outcome of shared operational interests and pan-European interests.

5.2 Regression Results

5.2.1 Electoral Systems' Effects

The empirical analysis of MEP defection rates yields pivotal results relating to hypothesis testing and confirmation. Ordinary least squares linear regressions are run in RStudio to test the first three hypotheses and examine how electoral systems influence MEP defection rates in the ninth European Parliament. To test them, the dependent variable, the defection rate, includes both “against” and “abstention” votes in the exemplification process of defection. The first three hypotheses were the following: H1 party-centered electoral systems, H2 district magnitude, and H3 electoral thresholds. For this purpose, linear regressions are employed since defection rates can be classified as continuous proportions between 0 and 1, and the subsequent models make provision for direct interpretation of coefficients and other indicators. As explained later, diagnostic checks confirm linearity and whether assumptions were met for examining electoral system effects.

Hypothesis	Coefficient	P_Value	Significant	Hypothesis_Supported	Defection_Type
H1a: Party-centered systems (Binary)	-0,008864	0,3682	FALSE	FALSE	Extended (Against and Abstention votes)
H1b: Party-centered systems (Categorical - Mixed)	0,0038062	0,809	FALSE	FALSE	Extended (Against and Abstention votes)
H1c: Party-centered systems (Categorical - Party-centered)	-0,008404	0,4025	FALSE	FALSE	Extended (Against and Abstention votes)
H1d: Party-centered systems (Scale)	-0,003866	0,437	FALSE	FALSE	Extended (Against and Abstention votes)
H2: Non-nationwide districts	0,0060124	0,5634	FALSE	FALSE	Extended (Against and Abstention votes)
H3: Higher thresholds	0,0018682	0,5662	FALSE	FALSE	Extended (Against and Abstention votes)

Table 4.: Regression results including the correlation between independent and dependent variables related to electoral systems' elements.

To capture different operationalizations of the centrality of electoral systems (H1), which is a categorical variable, linear regression was employed to test H1. The first hypothesis predicted higher defection in party-centered systems owing to the stronger national party control over MEPs. Nonetheless, contrary to the first hypothesis, party-centered electoral systems did not cause higher defection rates than candidate-centered systems. Regression results were proven to be statistically insignificant across all operationalizations. The binary measure ($\beta = -0.0089$, $p = 0.368$) suggests a non-significant negative effect, which is accompanied by no consistent pattern when it comes to categorical versions (mixed: $\beta = -0.0084$, $p = 0.403$) (Scribbr, 2020). The results determined that support for H1 cannot be backed as the element of candidate selection in the EP elections does not constitute a defection factor.

The lack of significance when taking into account different operationalization schemes of electoral systems pertains to minimal variation in median defection rates across electoral system types (Figure 6). The boxes represent the interquartile range of defection in the three types of electoral systems as follows: candidate-centered: ~ 0.1 - 0.25 , mixed: ~ 0.1 - 0.3 , party-

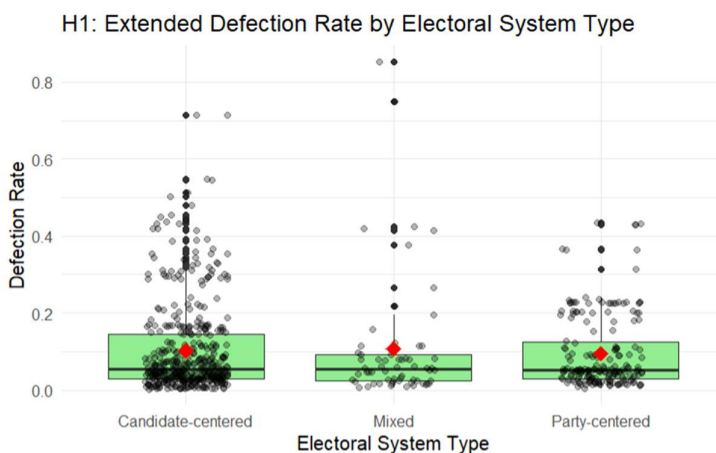


Figure 6.: Boxplot representing the interquartile range of defection across electoral systems.

centered: ~ 0.1 - 0.25 . The similarity in median defection across the various systems is an indicator of no institutional effect of the electoral system on defection. Even though it seems that individual-level dissent dominated EP9 rather than an electoral system-based one, it can be argued that in mixed systems defection is spread more evenly compared to the

other two types of systems. This could signify a behavior variation in MEPs elected under these systems. As a consequence, the plot confirms regression's findings that electoral rules might not be the main explanatory variable for defections in the ninth term of the EP.

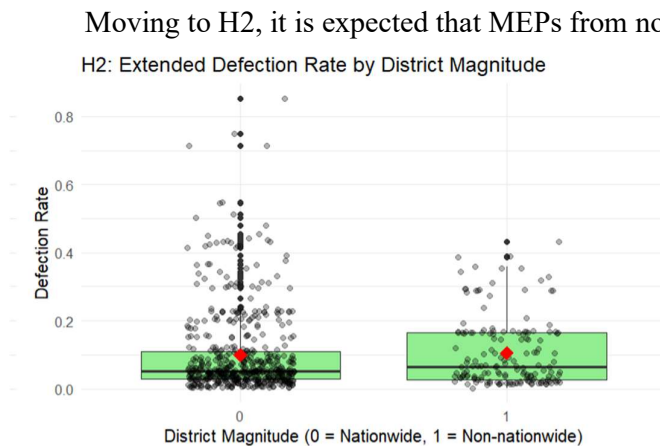


Figure 7.: Boxplot representing defection rates by district magnitude.

EP9. The binary code of district magnitude may have also oversimplified the analysis and have probably excluded other factors associated with the transnational context within which the EP operates. Both groups have medians lying around ~ 0.15 - 0.20 , which implies that no meaningful difference exists in defection rates based on district size (Figure 7.). Nevertheless, non-nationwide districts show a broader variability in MEP behavior since their voting patterns indicate that their defection is more spread out with inconsistent behavior. In general, the absence of differentiated patterns in the median defection rate between non-nationwide and nationwide districts shows no consistent directional effect of district magnitude on defection rates.

Regarding the third parameter examined, the third hypothesis claimed that lower electoral thresholds would increase defection. Results demonstrated that an insignificant

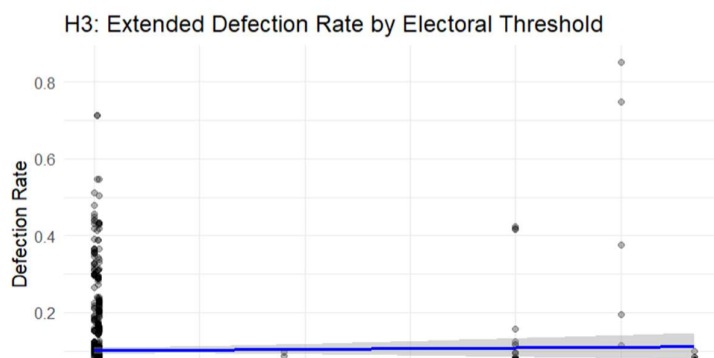


Figure 8.: Scatterplot showing individual data points representing MEPs' defection in correlation to electoral threshold.

coefficient ($\beta = +0.0019$, $p = 0.566$) indicates thresholds do not have a measurable effect on defection. As indicated in Figure 8, no visible trends are detected with no upward or downward

sloping, which confirms the regression's null result. The full data reveal that countries with 0% thresholds (e.g., Portugal, Latvia) show both quite low and high defection rates. This subsequently implies that thresholds do not constrain or augment defection even where entry barriers are high. While the plot assumes a linear relationship, the threshold might have a non-linear impact, and it seems to slightly matter only when the entry barrier is over 4% (Figure 8). As the last national electoral rule in the EP elections, it can be said that electoral thresholds are irrelevant to defection rates in EP9.

5.2.2 Political Groupings' and Policy Salience's Effects

Policy Areas and European Party Groups	estimate	std. error	statistic	p.value
(Intercept)	0,158086576	0,00489512	32,2947272	1,0942E-216
Budget	-0,004803089	0,006058879	-0,79273551	0,427952662
Budgetary Control	-0,023427891	0,006058879	-3,866703623	0,000111087
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	-0,01588409	0,006058879	-2,621621743	0,008765855
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	0,01183757	0,006055557	1,954827438	0,050634102
Culture & Education	-0,016267291	0,006058879	-2,68486788	0,007269035
Development	0,024886737	0,006079096	4,093822253	4,27999E-05
Economic & Monetary Affairs	-0,017914144	0,006058879	-2,956676133	0,003117754
Employment & Social Affairs	-0,002745267	0,006055557	-0,453346655	0,650309983
Environment & Public Health	-0,008256904	0,006055557	-1,36352504	0,172750925
Fisheries	-0,015888995	0,006058879	-2,622431318	0,008745073
Foreign & Security Policy	-0,023894677	0,006055557	-3,945908693	8,00973E-05
Gender Equality	0,027729872	0,006058879	4,576732768	4,78571E-06
Industry, Research & Energy	-0,033803409	0,006058879	-5,579152035	2,48637E-08
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	-0,017304814	0,006058879	-2,856107959	0,004298432
International Trade	-0,018183598	0,006058879	-3,001148649	0,002696946
Legal Affairs	-0,025009938	0,006058879	-4,127815893	3,69502E-05
Petitions	-0,023437342	0,006058879	-3,868263541	0,00011038
Regional Development	-0,013512477	0,006062216	-2,22896668	0,025840513
Transport & Tourism	0,028130332	0,006058879	4,642827543	3,485E-06
epg_ideology Center-Right (EPP)	-0,077462145	0,002982935	-25,96843189	1,7909E-143
epg_ideology Center-Left (S&D)	-0,105944239	0,003070101	-34,50838379	2,6351E-245
epg_ideology Greens/EFA	-0,129783463	0,003522803	-36,84096009	5,074E-277

Table 5.: Results of the two models examined the standalone effects of Policy Areas and European Party Groups on defection.

Regression analysis is employed to apply linear models and examine the effects of policy areas and ideological inclinations on MEP defection rates during EP9. Five different models were tested: 1. standalone effects of policy areas, 2. EP groups, followed by 3. two combined additive models, and 4. an interaction model. Through the combined additive model, which integrates both factors, ideological inclination emerged as a stronger defection predictor in comparison to policy areas. For instance, it was revealed that center-right (EPP), center-left (S&D), and Green/Regionalist (Greens/EFA) ideologies exhibit negative coefficients of -0.077, -0.106, and -0.130, respectively. Since all p-values in these ideological groups are lower than 0.001, it is indicated that there are significantly lower defection rates in these groups compared to the right-wing to far-right groups. Having said that, policy areas showed weaker effects with noticeable variations. Development and Gender Equality policies serve as an example of how positively policy areas influence defection, with coefficient values at 0.025 and 0.028 ($p < 0.001$). Conversely, Industry/Research/Energy and Foreign/Security Policy reduce defection across different groups at a significant rate with coefficients at -0.034 and -0.024, respectively ($p < 0.001$). These findings lead to the conclusion that ideological cohesion generally overrides policy-specific influences in EP9.

Laying stress on statistical significance, the model researching the policy areas' effects on defection revealed that certain policy domains affect defection probabilities across all EPGs. In areas like Development (coefficient 0.024, $p < 0.001$) and Gender Equality (0.028, $p < 0.001$), there is an increase in defection odds. On the other side, Industry/Research/Energy (-0.034, $p < 0.001$) and Petitions (-0.023, $p < 0.001$) decrease them, implying higher cohesion based on widespread consensus in technical or procedural voting. The other statistical model, which examined the effects of ideological groupings on defection, underscores ideological effects as follows: Greens/EFA shows the strongest negative association with defection (-0.130, $p < 0.001$). In combined models, these patterns persist with minimal attenuation or reduction in values. An example in the correlation between policy area and EPG is that ECR and ID groups have positive coefficients, but Greens/EFA remains highly significant (-0.130, $p < 0.001$). Low vote counts in groups like the Left and Renew Europe did not allow the models to estimate a coefficient to avoid convergence issues. Despite this fact, these results

statistically affirm RQ2 by confirming that there is a policy-driven and group-based defection in the ninth European Parliament term.

Finally, subtly different insights are provided by the interaction model, which disclosed how policy areas moderate ideological effects on defection. Positive interactions were statistically significant in different policy domains (see, Table 11. in Appendices). Striking examples are Development with center-right (EPP) (0.106, $p < 0.001$) and International Trade with Greens/EFA (0.130, $p < 0.001$). These findings imply that certain policies intensify defection even in ideologically aligned groups such as the highly cohesive EPP and Greens. Conversely, Industry and Energy sectors, among others, showed negative effects (-0.103, $p < 0.001$) that are counterbalanced by positive interactions with center-left S&D (0.048, $p = 0.010$). For RQ2, defection is driven mostly due to ideological grouping, but policy areas act as catalysts in certain votes, for example, economic policies and EU integration unify groups on the center-left and right, while social and development issues lead to fragmentation in the extremes.

6 Analysis & Discussion

This segment of the thesis encompasses answers to the research question by engaging in a discussion on the main findings presented above. To facilitate how the research unfolded and its relation to the theory used, the analysis is divided into two parts, each of which guides the dialogue that acts as a springboard for an answer to the two research questions. In that manner, weaknesses and strengths of the research design are revealed, as well as how the examined phenomena shaped defection in the ninth term of the EP. Thus, the analysis part will begin with the scrutiny of the effects of three elements of electoral systems used across the EU for the 2019 EP elections on defection (First Analysis). Then, it will move on to the review of the link between policy salience and ideological groupings with defection rates (Second Analysis). The findings are analyzed by synthesizing the general empirical and regression results, which are followed by a discussion that interprets them in relation to the generic contextual research purpose.

6.1 First Analysis

The first analysis frames the discussion surrounding the first research question, which attempts to provide a solid answer on how three elements of electoral systems could be indicators for defection of MEPs from their respective European party group majority voting patterns in the ninth term of the EP.

Electoral System Type concerning Party-Centered Control

While the regression results reveal no significant effect of electoral system types on MEP defection in this term, it seems that the used theory of rational choice institutionalism is not supported by the evidence. Although the null result does not necessarily debunk the theoretical framework or reject previous empirical findings (Hix, 2004; Faas, 2003), it is

arguable that defection in this term of the EP might be maintained or undermined regardless of electoral design across EU countries. Additionally, the similarity in median defection (see, Figure 6.1 in Sub-chapter 5.2.1) suggests that the limited institution-based variation does not produce statistically significant differences. The explanation behind the null finding for the type of electoral system might be hidden in the supranational nature of the EP and its transnational character.

Further, MEPs' incentives and influence might often be part of pan-European policy agendas rather than national politics. The descriptive statistics in the form of the above-mentioned general empirical findings can explain the underperformance of the element of the electoral system, as descriptive analysis reveals significant ideological and policy-area effects. In other words, regression might have failed to find statistical significance, probably attributed to behavioral drivers (see, e.g., Dafydd, 2014). A faint suggestion stemming from the results is that mixed systems of candidates' selection in countries, such as Sweden, Portugal, Latvia, and Croatia, may enhance fair distribution of defection across MEPs compared to candidate- or party-centered systems. In accordance with the principal-agent theory, this kind of system can be expected to produce a wider range of strategic behaviors, even if this variability is not sufficient to create a concrete regression coefficient with significant indicators. Consequently, the centrality of candidate selection is not a strong indicator in this research for EP9 and leads the study to other EPG structural elements, such as ideology and policy areas.

District Magnitude

Similarly, the second hypothesis focused on non-nationwide-based higher defection due to localized electoral motives. The regression results produced a negligible coefficient accompanied by identical median defection rates across the two district types. Nevertheless, descriptive data imply that slightly broader variability regarding defection rates was noticed among MEPs from non-nationwide districts. This means that some MEPs show quite low defection, while others are substantially and consistently higher throughout the EP9 term. This scattering could hint at other conditional effects, in which certain MEPs from smaller

constituencies with regional characteristics may feel stronger constituent attachment. This would be aligned with Klüver and Spoon's (2015) empirical observation in other EP's terms which underline that policy salience with localism. Therefore, this result lead also to scrutiny of how policy areas (e.g., Fisheries and Agriculture) can be associated with strong implication for defection in the EP. Conclusively, district size seems to be insufficient to shape defection of MEPs from their respective EPGs in a consistent manner from different EU member states, even though it could drive the research into the correlation between localism and defection.

Electoral Thresholds

The third hypothesis expected that MEPs would defect more when elected in countries with lower or zero electoral thresholds in EP elections. Nonetheless, the regression results for H3 revealed that thresholds do not exert a statistically significant effect on defection in EP9. This does not confirm the expectations drawn from principal-agent theory and other studies (see, e.g., Hix, 2004; Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017). With this in mind, the anticipated results that a lower threshold would lead MEPs to defect more based on expected independent voting behavior by reducing their reliance on national parties are denied by the insignificant coefficients. The statistical trends coming from descriptives are in agreement with the regression findings since they reveal that countries with 0% thresholds exhibit both high and low defection rates. In that way, threshold levels are unable to explain voting divergence and suggest that MEPs are influenced by other institutional constraints or freedoms when it comes to defecting.

In spite of the absence of a statistically significant correlation, there are meager indicators that show a non-linear effect. For instance, it is apparent that in some cases, defection percentages were slightly higher in EU member states where thresholds exceeded 4%, such as Croatia, Finland, France, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, and Slovakia. Drawing from Doverger's argument (1959, in Gorecki & Kukolowicz, 2017) that high thresholds tend to foster coordination in a strategic manner by enhancing dissent in highly salient issues for both national and European parties. The inconsistency of defection rates, however, does not allow the research to conclude on the relevance of the threshold to defection in EP9. Thus, the data

could imply that threshold effects, in case they are present, could only have a uniform influence on defection when it comes to interacting with group cohesion elements related to ideology and policy areas.

6.2 Second Analysis

The second analysis captures the dialogue between theoretical expectations depicted in the fourth and fifth hypotheses and the empirical results. In that manner, certain thematic patterns are revealed which answer the second research questions in terms of ideological groupings and policy areas shape defection in EP9.

Ideological Grouping

The findings for EP9 show support for H4, which predicted that political groupings on the basis of ideological inclination could be a key predictor for defection. In consistency with previous findings in other terms of the EP on cohesion/defection (Hix, 2004; Klüver & Spoon, 2015), right-wing to far-right EPGs (ID and ECR groups) have displayed the highest defection rates. Not only have the right-leaning to far-right MEPs less loyalty to their EPG majority voting intentions, but their defection is far exceeding that of their centrist and left-wing colleagues (Figure 2). This behavioral pattern with ideological roots reflects alignment defined by looser terms and/or weaker internal whip in these groups, as identified in studies on radical right fragmented behavior (McDonnell & Werner, 2018; Mudde, 2019). Thus, it becomes obvious that radical right and far-right powers in the EP show a loose interaction between their members and parliamentary discipline.

Ideological groupings and defection are particularly stark in the right bank of the EP, especially in particular policy areas. The far-right IDG stands out with the highest variation in defection, with rates between 4% (procedural votes) and 31% (Foreign and Security Policy). This can be a reflection of a deeply fractured group of MEPs in terms of ideology on core EU

issues. For IDG, defection seems to be an ingrained behavioral element of MEPs that might be connected to divergent strategic imperatives among national parties on the far-right. The right-wing ECR has similar patterns of legislative behavior when its MEPs defect in specific areas but with moderate peaks compared to IDG, 19-22% defection in Development, Agriculture, and Gender Equality. In both groups, patterns of resistance in these groups demonstrate weaker internal discipline in areas in which nationally rooted actors develop divergent strategic priorities, as analyzed below.

For center-right to center groups, EPP and Renew Europe (REG), cohesion appears to be strategically positioned thanks to their commitment to pro-EU orientation. The EPP group maintains low defection rates, evidently under 6%, on economic, procedural, and integration matters. On the other hand, the group suffers from higher defection on culturally and morally challenging issues, encompassing defection rates at 17.5% in Gender Equality and Development. The more liberal and centrist REG adopt similar patterns in defection rates, with dissent accumulated in Employment (14%) and Environmental policy (10%). This could be an outcome of their cohesion being undermined in policies that intersect with moral and distributive policies or even with national incentives. Both party groupings are, at large, unified in European integration while emphasizing institutional aspects of discipline throughout EP9. At the same time, they show vulnerabilities due to the internal ideological and political breadth of the national parties making up the groupings.

The left-of-center blocs of the EP9, S&D, and Greens/EFA displayed the highest cohesion, even with limited varying levels of discipline. The EU governing S&D seems to maintain close to total unity across different domains. This crosscut cohesion is disrupted by the policy area of Transport and Tourism, with 11% defection, which is still significantly lower than the defection rates among EPGs on the right but comparable to the ones in the center. Comparably, Greens/EFA emerged as the group with the lowest defection rates, consistently below 3.5%. Almost unanimous support among Greens/EFA MEPs lies in priority areas like Agriculture and Development, where the group's progressive agenda is quite salient. The most surprising finding is that despite the fact that the Greens/EFA are essentially composed of more than two pan-European parties—with the main ones being the Greens and European Free Alliance (EFA) European parties—their cohesion is the highest in

EP9. Notably, the former has a green progressive agenda while the latter focuses on regional and separatist issues. On the left aisle of Parliament, the Left occupies the middle ground when it comes to defecting MEPs. This is depicted in their strong unity in areas such as Gender Equality and Environment but also in the significant dissent in Constitutional Affairs, Fisheries, and Foreign/Security Policy (14-21%). All in all, these patterns underline that even heterogeneous and homogenous political groupings can not only have absolute cohesion, but they can also fracture policy salience, contest their values and interests.

Policy Areas, Salience, and Defection

Drawing from the fifth hypothesis, it is expected that right-wing populist and far-right MEPs are more likely to defect in policy areas related to socio-economic and pro-EU issues. Beginning with the IDG, the highest dissent takes place in the Foreign and Security Policy area (31.4%), Development (29%), and Gender Equality (27%). All these domains are linked to sovereignty and cultural values, which are connected to the EU's redistributive and political role on the regional and world stage. In order to favor their national party incentives, MEPs often end up navigating among their supranational and domestic affiliations. In ECR group, defection is concentrated in Development, Agriculture, and Gender Equality (19-22%). While this comes with no great surprise, it is still a pattern that shows how policy and ideological affiliations shape defection. The main similarity in both parliamentary groups lies in the notion of defending issues entrenched within the socio-political values of their ideology as low-salience issues rarely or never cause high defection.

For the mainstream right and centrist groups, policy-linked defection is not issue-specific in the manner it is for the right-wing groups. Defection among EPP ranks seems to be more selective and targeted in areas like Gender Equality (the highest 17.5%) and Development, where MEPs and their national parties differ in moral and progressive policies from the EPG's objectives. At the same time, EPP members have demonstrated a remarkable cohesion in integration and economic governance issues as the main governing political family in the EP. Moving to the center, Renew Europe Group faces cohesion challenges in Employment (14% defection) and Environment (10%). Within this broad pro-EU group, it is

apparent that labor policies and regulatory environmental measures constitute a dissent factor for MEPs. Therefore, it can be argued that salience does destabilize groups' cohesion in either EPGs. Still, it can act as a triggering factor in specific policy areas that might overlap with national political agendas.

Conversely, the highly cohesive S&D and Greens/EFA do not show widespread variation in cohesion driven by policy areas. The governing center-left S&D seems to have concrete voting patterns and defection rarely exceeds 5%, with the sole exception of the Transport and Tourism sector, with regional-economic-based defection at 11%. The Greens/EFA group has markedly demonstrated consistency with defection, which never exceeded 3.5%. The Left party group showed higher defection compared to S&D and Greens/EFA, with sharp variations in Fisheries, Foreign, and Constitutional issues (14-21%). For all these groups, policy salience amplifies cohesion rather than undermines it, unless the policy domain keeps MEPs shifting away from shared priorities and values.

6.3 Discussion

This final discussion segment is divided thematically into parts that summarize the answers to the research questions by stressing how the findings unfolded, and present interesting results by analyzing findings from both descriptive and regression statistics.

This section of the thesis delves into the answers to the research questions by summarizing the findings and incorporating elements from the theoretical expectations. Focusing on the first research question, the goal of RQ1 was to examine the effects of electoral systems on defection rates of individual MEPs in the ninth European Parliament term. None of the examined three electoral systems' rules —candidate selection system, district magnitude, and electoral thresholds— showed statistically significant effects on defection. These results suggest that institutional rules did not prove to be as important when it comes to predicting legislative behavior in EP9. As null regression results indicate that these institutional rules have zero impact on defection rates, the theoretical expectations were

not confirmed. This can be attributed to limitations of the data that were only included in voting records between 2019 and 2022. Therefore, contextual factors such as the polycrisis mixture in EP9 and access to data with limited scope for the entire term may have resulted in an undetectable impact of these variables.

Contributing to the emerging scholarship on EP9, the thesis showed that EP's fragmented landscape might have contributed to the nullification of the traditional institutional factors, such as electoral systems. Therefore, the research orients its focus on shedding light on other aspects of defection that stem from non-traditional institutional levers like the ideological nature of transnational party alliances in the EP. Researching legislative behavior on account of ideological groupings and policy areas resulted in stark and statistically significant results. The far-right Identity and Democracy Group and the right-wing European Conservatives and Reformists emerged as the least cohesive groupings during the ninth European Parliament term. This outcome supports H4 and H5 since it confirms that right-leaning EPGs not only defect more frequently in general but also tend to defect in certain socio-economic policy domains, such as (e.g., Gender Equality and Development) and sovereignty issues (e.g., Foreign Policy).

The so-called "thin-centered" alliances, as Mudde (2019) characterized radical right EPGs, display fractured transnational cohesion in various policy areas. In contrast, the mainstream governing EPP and S&D, along with centrist Renew and center-left Greens/EFA groups, maintained high discipline across most policy areas, with some variation in morally and challenging domains. This aligns with Klüver and Spoon's (2015) argument and findings that policy salience has the propensity to amplify principal-agent tensions in the EP in certain policy areas. Another argument confirmed through the research is that policy salience can be regarded as a means of moderation since high-defection areas in this EP term (e.g., Constitutional Affairs, Fisheries, Development) are often driven by ideological and individual choices, while other areas bring in broad consensus among EPGs and individual MEPs. Hence, the regression highlighted the correlation tensions between policy-specific and ideological tensions in each European Party Group, with the right-wing to far-right groups exhibiting substantial disparities compared to centrist and left-leaning groups.

Another interesting finding emerged that is interconnected with noticeable regional differences in defection rates of MEPs from across the EU. The main regional difference lies in the division lines between East and West, as well as South and North. More specifically, the top five countries with the highest defection rates are Slovakia (17.4%), Croatia (16.7%), Greece (16%), the Czech Republic (15.9%), and Italy (15%). It is noteworthy that the rest of the countries are distributed with no evident regional disparities between the average and low defection rates (Figure 1). In spite of this, it is still apparent that those mentioned earlier, Southern and Eastern countries, may reflect divergent national party or individual MEPs' strategies in votes related to areas salient for their electorate (see, e.g., Dafydd, 2014). Besides this reasoning, the reason behind this result might be associated with slower EU integration tendencies in these countries (see, e.g., Lindstädt et al., 2012), as newer member states (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Croatia), or rising Euroscepticism in older ones (Greece, Italy).

In addition, the study underscores the dual reality during the ninth European Parliament term. Firstly, the cohesion in the Parliament can overall be characterized as robust since the largest groups and the majority of them showed markedly low defection in EP9, in accordance with Sebastião's work (2024), which implied a consistent high cohesion rate across legislatures and that ideological groups in the EP remain the leading structuring indicator of voting. Secondly, defection is observed on critical or populist voices among European Party Groups (IDG, ECR, The Left), which often have limited influence over policymaking since they have never assumed offices as governing parties in the composition of the European Commission. Accordingly, it becomes evident that the radical right populist surge has not disrupted the high cohesion of mainstream power in EP9, which implies that their electoral rise throughout the past decade does not come along with a "contagion effect" of their ideas or norms (see, e.g., Sebastião, 2024).

Lastly, a last close look at the findings reveals that electoral rules have little to do with defection in EP9. Electoral systems and their rules may matter less due to the dominance of ideological dynamics or the absence of the full voting records for EP9, since the ones used covered 2019-2022. Concomitantly, it is found that defection is uniquely shaped by ideological elements and policy salience, which is seemingly related to ideological sensitivities or divergent member state interests. Results also demonstrate that centrist and

pro-EU ideologies are correlated with lower defection across policies, and in contrast, right-wing groups defect more, apparently owing to their populist and sovereigntist agenda.

Generally speaking, defection rates remained low on average in most policy areas during the ninth European Parliament term, while they are evidently interconnected with ideological and strategic options rather than institutional structures.

7 Conclusion

In this study, the aim was to examine the determinants of defection, or at least some aspects of it, among Members of the European Parliament during its ninth term. The statistical analysis of the individual voting patterns of MEPs reveals that ideological groupings and specific policy areas shape defection uniquely on different occasions throughout EP9. In alignment with rational choice theory, it is found that the MEPs' voting behavior is influenced by their ideological or policy priorities rather than their respective nationality (Pollack, 2019). The European Parliament, during its ninth term, became a vehicle of supranationalism in which right-wing populists faced loose cohesion in evidently important policy areas. Statistical analysis also sheds light on the null results of electoral systems on defection in EP9. This contrasts with previous findings from other European Parliament terms and raises the question as to how the theory and the study were operationalized.

In conclusion, these results might be attributed to the absence of complete data for the whole ninth term or the way the research was operationalized. Furthermore, the findings on the significance of ideological groups and policy salience may suggest that institutional constraints no longer define the Parliament as it once was. The context of the “polycrisis” marked by socio-political developments such as Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, roll-call voting, and political realignment, appears to intensify ideological and policy-based cleavages. Thus, the European Parliament's institutional maturation is profoundly marked by its transnational ideological identity, which incorporates the salience of particular issues. In this process, high cohesion and consensus on certain policy areas by the majority of EP9 have been the cornerstone for the succession of national and regional electoral incentives to supranationalism and focus on EU-level solutions.

7.1 Recommendations for Further Research

The time and data limitations of this project have left several avenues uncovered, which are promising for future research. The project's focus on a single term of the EP paves the way for similar studies with a detailed policy and ideology focus from a longitudinal perspective. Moreover, employing a mixed methods approach, for instance, qualitative interviews with MEPs and party whips along with quantitative research, could provide the researcher with vital aspects of the legislative behavior, especially in the event of a “polycrisis” landscape. This approach could also give answers as to why MEPs are behaving in a certain policy area vote. Finally, a wider investigation into the regional and pan-European disparities in defection rates could contribute to the discussion of how domestic politics affect political instability or priorities in the European Parliament domain.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.: Tables

Country	total_vote	defection	defection_rat	count_mep
Slovakia	181295	31647	0,174560799	14
Croatia	146732	24583	0,167536734	12
Greece	263246	42303	0,160697598	21
Czech Republic	275663	44043	0,15977117	21
Hungary	260389	40487	0,155486599	21
Italy	983521	147869	0,150346561	76
Belgium	265732	38751	0,145827375	21
Sweden	254827	33699	0,132242659	21
Netherlands	352639	45323	0,128525206	29
Denmark	181749	22571	0,124187753	14
France	1011206	124472	0,123092624	78
Latvia	103501	10585	0,102269543	8
Finland	179857	18198	0,101180382	14
Austria	250052	22314	0,089237439	19
Malta	72132	6380	0,088448955	6
Estonia	90970	7736	0,085039024	7
Ireland	166026	13648	0,082203992	13
Germany	1197005	91392	0,076350558	96
Lithuania	141854	9314	0,065659058	11
Bulgaria	218074	13822	0,063382155	17
Cyprus	78491	4926	0,062758788	6
Spain	771707	45277	0,058671231	59
Slovenia	93015	4946	0,053174219	8
Romania	413799	19090	0,046133509	33
Portugal	267150	11737	0,043934119	21
Luxembourg	79468	3220	0,040519454	6
Poland	673539	21696	0,032211943	52

Table 6.: Defection rates and absolute numbers by country in EP9.

EPG	total_votes	defections	defection_rat	count_meps
NI	522819	191243	0,365791985	42
IDG	842161	202127	0,240009927	65
ECR	817116	119926	0,146767411	64
The Left	498784	42480	0,085167126	39
REG	1311587	95497	0,072810267	102
EPP	2261531	154017	0,06810298	176
S&D	1814715	76794	0,042317389	145
Greens/EFA	904926	17945	0,019830351	71

Table 7.: Defection rates and absolute vote numbers by European Party Group in EP9.

Policy area	total_votes	defections	defection_rate
Development	136963	17666	0,12898374
Gender equality	438098	53284	0,121625755
Employment & Social Affairs	511649	60179	0,117617742
Constitutional and inter-institutional affairs	303102	35553	0,117297147
Transport & tourism	218747	25436	0,116280452
Regional Development	52974	5536	0,104504096
Agriculture	603399	62426	0,103457248
Economic & monetary affairs	516376	53081	0,10279525
Fisheries	139605	14202	0,101729881
Budget	558601	56491	0,101129429
Environment & public health	1244979	125479	0,100788045
Foreign & security policy	1680740	165207	0,098294204
Internal market & consumer protection	206085	20245	0,098236165
Legal affairs	145465	13263	0,091176572
International trade	96070	8728	0,090850422
Budgetary control	625316	56090	0,089698648
Civil liberties, justice & home affairs	1005447	87660	0,087185103
Petitions	97349	8209	0,084325468
Culture & education	74887	6077	0,081148931
Industry, Research & Energy	237220	19099	0,080511761
Employment & social affairs	35374	2838	0,080228416
Regional development	28739	2216	0,077107763
Industry, research & energy	13146	953	0,072493534
Internal regulations of the EP	2638	92	0,034874905
Legal Affairs	670	19	0,028358209

Table 8.: Defection rates and absolute numbers by Policy Area in EP9.

Committee responsable	total_vote	efect	fection
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	626	165	0,26358
Committee on Development/Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	31444	4781	0,15205
Committee on Development, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	38565	5663	0,14684
Committee on Development and Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	30078	4388	0,14589
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	60190	8412	0,13976
Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety/Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development	22118	3026	0,13681
Committee on Constitutional Affairs	223330	27428	0,12281
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	186965	22759	0,12173
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs	433092	51931	0,11991
Committee on Transport and Tourism	136828	16183	0,11827
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy/Committee on Transport and Tourism	682	80	0,1173
Committee on Budgets, Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs	14158	1630	0,11513
Committee on Development	55698	6365	0,11428
Committee on Industry, Research & Energy	25436	2766	0,10874
Committee on Foreign Affairs/Committee on Development	684	74	0,10819
Committee on Foreign Affairs	898391	92206	0,10263
Committee on Fisheries	139605	14202	0,10173
Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development	570154	57991	0,10171
Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	770229	78290	0,10165
Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, independent	15181	1540	0,10144
Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection	179444	18024	0,10044
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs	414614	41235	0,09945
0	2139369	212709	0,09943
Special Committee on Beating Cancer	52342	5199	0,09933
Committee on Budgets	436494	43152	0,09886
Committee on Budgets/Committee on Budgetary Control	2745	269	0,098
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality	72497	7017	0,09679
European Parliament delegation to the Conciliation Committee	1304	124	0,09509
Committee on Regional Development	81713	7752	0,09487
Committee on International Trade	70160	6521	0,09294
Committee on Legal Affairs	144875	13248	0,09144
Committee on foreign affairs and security policy	35641	3204	0,0899
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	129353	11619	0,08982
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs/Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	21535	1931	0,08967
Committee on Budgetary Control	619176	55103	0,08899
Committee on Petitions	74132	6460	0,08714
Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection	25074	2112	0,08423
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	474193	38790	0,0818
Committee on Budgets/Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs	43095	3522	0,08173
Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on Development, Committee on Budgets	10901	854	0,07834
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy	175431	13358	0,07614
Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age	21921	1656	0,07554
Committee on Culture and Education	47507	3475	0,07315
Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on International Trade	27666	1836	0,06636
Committee on Legal Affairs, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	16283	885	0,05435
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy	686	29	0,04227
Committee on Budgets/Committee on Budgetary Control	1361	48	0,03527
Committee on Legal affairs	673	17	0,02526

Table 9.: Defection rate and absolute numbers by Committee responsible in EP9.

policy_area_clean	EPG	total_votes	defections	defection_rate
Foreign & Security Policy	IDG	157589	49532	0,314311278
Development	IDG	12827	3886	0,302954705
Regional Development	IDG	7724	2244	0,290523045
Economic & Monetary Affairs	IDG	48962	13998	0,285895184
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	IDG	19406	5391	0,27780068
Employment & Social Affairs	IDG	51292	13481	0,262828511
Gender Equality	IDG	41185	10593	0,257205293
Budgetary Control	IDG	59091	14745	0,249530385
Legal Affairs	IDG	13699	3259	0,237900577
Fisheries	IDG	13095	2868	0,219014891
Environment & Public Health	IDG	115798	25306	0,218535726
Development	ECR	12615	2715	0,215219976
Industry, Research & Energy	IDG	23647	5087	0,215122426
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	The Left	16945	3619	0,213573325
Petitions	IDG	9086	1929	0,212304645
International Trade	IDG	9045	1915	0,211719182
Budget	IDG	53087	11112	0,209316782
Fisheries	The Left	7454	1532	0,205527234
Culture & Education	IDG	6973	1421	0,203786032
Agriculture	IDG	56654	11492	0,202845342
Agriculture	ECR	54909	10969	0,199766887
Gender Equality	ECR	40183	7836	0,195007839
Budget	ECR	50491	9608	0,190291339
Transport & Tourism	IDG	20800	3890	0,187019231
Gender Equality	EPP	109010	19058	0,174827997
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	IDG	93555	15963	0,170626904
Development	EPP	34235	5710	0,166788374
Petitions	ECR	8912	1465	0,164385099
Employment & Social Affairs	ECR	49943	8148	0,163145986
Budgetary Control	ECR	57092	9171	0,160635466
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	ECR	91346	14044	0,153745101
Culture & Education	ECR	6791	1038	0,152849359
Foreign & Security Policy	The Left	93208	13674	0,146704146
Regional Development	ECR	7393	1066	0,14419045
Legal Affairs	ECR	13264	1889	0,142415561
Economic & Monetary Affairs	ECR	46938	6635	0,141356683
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	IDG	28395	4005	0,141045959
Environment & Public Health	ECR	113153	15796	0,139598597
Employment & Social Affairs	REG	79527	10919	0,137299282
Fisheries	ECR	12717	1736	0,136510183
Transport & Tourism	ECR	19937	2696	0,135225962
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	ECR	18866	2510	0,13304357
Transport & Tourism	EPP	55287	6258	0,113191166
Budget	The Left	31252	3467	0,1109369
Transport & Tourism	S&D	44481	4891	0,10995706
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	EPP	75302	8231	0,109306526
Foreign & Security Policy	ECR	153641	16638	0,108291407
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	ECR	27326	2917	0,106748152

Employment & Social Affairs	EPP	137647	14427	0,104811583
Environment & Public Health	REG	181238	18532	0,102252287
International Trade	ECR	8651	877	0,101375564
International Trade	The Left	5310	526	0,09905838
Industry, Research & Energy	ECR	22704	2162	0,095225511
Agriculture	REG	87354	8185	0,093699201
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	REG	44636	4059	0,090935568
Legal Affairs	REG	21243	1877	0,088358518
Development	REG	20209	1760	0,08708991
Economic & Monetary Affairs	The Left	28591	2382	0,083312931
Economic & Monetary Affairs	REG	75332	6218	0,082541284
Agriculture	The Left	33623	2686	0,079885792
Agriculture	S&D	121965	9676	0,079334235
Fisheries	REG	20513	1579	0,076975576
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	S&D	62424	4721	0,075627964
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	REG	30111	2262	0,075122048
Environment & Public Health	EPP	314192	23389	0,074441743
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	The Left	11331	841	0,074221163
Budgetary Control	REG	91469	6734	0,073620571
Regional Development	EPP	20656	1400	0,067776917
Internal Regulations Of The Ep	REG	387	26	0,067183463
Transport & Tourism	REG	31717	2128	0,067093357
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	EPP	254615	17063	0,067014905
International Trade	S&D	19579	1306	0,066704122
Transport & Tourism	The Left	12144	805	0,066287879
Culture & Education	EPP	18876	1235	0,065426997
Industry, Research & Energy	REG	36563	2351	0,064299975
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	The Left	56197	3469	0,061729274
Petitions	The Left	5400	328	0,060740741
Legal Affairs	The Left	8064	475	0,05890377
Budget	EPP	141411	8063	0,057018195
Employment & Social Affairs	The Left	30286	1718	0,05672588
International Trade	REG	14046	796	0,056670938
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	S&D	41868	2299	0,054910672
Budget	REG	81166	4421	0,05446862
Industry, Research & Energy	The Left	13700	739	0,053941606
Fisheries	S&D	28346	1503	0,053023354
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	REG	146753	7721	0,052612212
Culture & Education	The Left	4189	218	0,05204106
Petitions	EPP	24377	1262	0,051770111
Gender Equality	REG	64491	3286	0,050952846
Legal Affairs	EPP	36617	1862	0,050850698
Fisheries	EPP	35068	1781	0,050787042
Regional Development	The Left	4566	230	0,050372317

Internal Market & Consumer Protection	EPP	51919	2557	0,049249793
Budgetary Control	The Left	34741	1704	0,049048674
Economic & Monetary Affairs	EPP	130360	6287	0,048227984
Petitions	REG	14225	679	0,047732865
Budget	S&D	112915	5375	0,047602179
Environment & Public Health	The Left	69743	3317	0,047560329
Environment & Public Health	S&D	253256	11814	0,046648451
International Trade	Greens/EFA	9611	439	0,045676829
Foreign & Security Policy	REG	247904	11202	0,045186847
Foreign & Security Policy	EPP	424471	19159	0,045136181
Foreign & Security Policy	S&D	337371	14418	0,042736335
Budgetary Control	EPP	157592	6726	0,042679831
Agriculture	EPP	151997	6388	0,042027145
Internal Regulations Of The Ep	ECR	244	10	0,040983607
Economic & Monetary Affairs	S&D	104718	4203	0,040136366
Internal Regulations Of The Ep	IDG	251	10	0,039840637
Regional Development	S&D	16494	647	0,039226385
Regional Development	REG	11772	450	0,0382263
International Trade	EPP	24200	899	0,03714876
Industry, Research & Energy	S&D	50848	1854	0,036461611
Industry, Research & Energy	EPP	63040	2253	0,035739213
Budget	Greens/EFA	55606	1967	0,035373881
Budgetary Control	S&D	126202	4179	0,03311358
Internal Regulations Of The Ep	The Left	151	5	0,033112583
Economic & Monetary Affairs	Greens/EFA	51213	1660	0,032413645
Constitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs	Greens/EFA	30729	975	0,031728986
Culture & Education	Greens/EFA	7663	233	0,030405846
Transport & Tourism	Greens/EFA	21409	638	0,029800551
Culture & Education	REG	10931	312	0,028542677
Gender Equality	The Left	24313	658	0,027063711
Legal Affairs	S&D	29584	741	0,025047323
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	S&D	202786	4929	0,024306412
Foreign & Security Policy	Greens/EFA	170486	4105	0,024078223
Fisheries	Greens/EFA	14005	309	0,022063549
Culture & Education	S&D	15093	310	0,020539323
Petitions	S&D	19707	401	0,0203481
Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs	Greens/EFA	101714	1925	0,018925615
Gender Equality	Greens/EFA	44404	811	0,01826412
Employment & Social Affairs	S&D	110816	1951	0,017605761
Environment & Public Health	Greens/EFA	126229	1826	0,014465773
Internal Market & Consumer Protection	Greens/EFA	20506	291	0,014190968
Development	S&D	27408	388	0,014156451
Employment & Social Affairs	Greens/EFA	55101	765	0,013883596
Regional Development	Greens/EFA	8236	114	0,013841671

Internal Regulations Of The Ep	EPP	659	9	0,013657056
Industry, Research & Energy	Greens/EFA	25067	339	0,013523756
Gender Equality	S&D	88320	1187	0,013439764
Development	The Left	7576	87	0,011483633
Budgetary Control	Greens/EFA	62426	698	0,011181239
Legal Affairs	Greens/EFA	14869	164	0,011029659
Petitions	Greens/EFA	9758	91	0,009325681
Agriculture	Greens/EFA	61702	533	0,008638294
Development	Greens/EFA	13931	61	0,004378724
Internal Regulations Of The Ep	Greens/EFA	261	1	0,003831418
Internal Regulations Of The Ep	S&D	534	1	0,001872659

Table 10.: Defection rates and absolute numbers by the combination of European Party Group and Policy Area in EP9.

Interaction between Policy Area and EPG	Estima	std. e	statistic	P Value
policy_area_cleanBudget:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,01788	0,0182	0,983413	0,3254305
policy_area_cleanBudgetary Control:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,03603	0,0182	1,98091	0,0476317
policy_area_cleanCivil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,06507	0,0182	3,57797	0,0003481
policy_area_cleanConstitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,15154	0,0182	8,332978	9,039E-17
policy_area_cleanCulture & Education:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,06491	0,0182	3,569263	0,0003598
policy_area_cleanDevelopment:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,10643	0,0182	5,84999	5,087E-09
policy_area_cleanEconomic & Monetary Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,06057	0,0182	3,330718	0,0008697
policy_area_cleanEmployment & Social Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,09579	0,0182	5,267151	1,418E-07
policy_area_cleanEnvironment & Public Health:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,08713	0,0182	4,79118	1,684E-06
policy_area_cleanFisheries:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,07044	0,0182	3,873487	0,000108
policy_area_cleanForeign & Security Policy:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,08899	0,0182	4,893326	1,009E-06
policy_area_cleanGender Equality:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,1326	0,0182	7,291529	3,323E-13
policy_area_cleanIndustry, Research & Energy:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,0963	0,0182	5,295169	1,217E-07
policy_area_cleanInternal Market & Consumer Protection:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,07027	0,0182	3,863888	0,0001124
policy_area_cleanInternational Trade:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,08947	0,0182	4,919735	8,819E-07
policy_area_cleanLegal Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,06344	0,0182	3,488591	0,0004879
policy_area_cleanPetitions:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,04182	0,0182	2,299409	0,0215045
policy_area_cleanRegional Development:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,07332	0,0182	4,031695	5,583E-05
policy_area_cleanTransport & Tourism:epg_ideologyCenter-Right	0,13218	0,0182	7,267978	3,953E-13
policy_area_cleanBudget:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,04065	0,0187	-2,17173	0,029902
policy_area_cleanBudgetary Control:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,02224	0,0187	-1,18812	0,2348187
policy_area_cleanCivil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,02543	0,0187	-1,35855	0,1743242
policy_area_cleanConstitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,07394	0,0187	3,952682	7,787E-05
policy_area_cleanCulture & Education:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,02657	0,0187	-1,41967	0,1557393
policy_area_cleanDevelopment:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,09211	0,0188	-4,91026	9,255E-07
policy_area_cleanEconomic & Monetary Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,0039	0,0187	0,208439	0,8348908
policy_area_cleanEmployment & Social Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,04015	0,0187	-2,1464	0,0318676
policy_area_cleanEnvironment & Public Health:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,01237	0,0187	0,660986	0,508638
policy_area_cleanFisheries:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,02256	0,0187	1,205233	0,2281451
policy_area_cleanForeign & Security Policy:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,03901	0,0187	2,085544	0,037048
policy_area_cleanGender Equality:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,07519	0,0187	-4,01693	5,944E-05
policy_area_cleanIndustry, Research & Energy:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,04817	0,0187	2,573587	0,0100809
policy_area_cleanInternal Market & Consumer Protection:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,02732	0,0187	1,459871	0,1443604
policy_area_cleanInternational Trade:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,06922	0,0187	3,698145	0,0002185
policy_area_cleanLegal Affairs:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,00918	0,0187	-0,49067	0,6236702
policy_area_cleanPetitions:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,03794	0,0187	-2,02682	0,0427104
policy_area_cleanRegional Development:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	-0,00437	0,0187	-0,23355	0,8153417
policy_area_cleanTransport & Tourism:epg_ideologyCenter-Left	0,08134	0,0187	4,345755	1,403E-05
policy_area_cleanBudget:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,0284	0,0215	1,322358	0,1860825
policy_area_cleanBudgetary Control:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,03855	0,0215	1,795119	0,0726682
policy_area_cleanCivil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,05076	0,0215	2,363565	0,0181212
policy_area_cleanConstitutional And Inter-Institutional Affairs:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,11147	0,0215	5,190714	2,141E-07
policy_area_cleanCulture & Education:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,06382	0,0215	2,971762	0,0029688
policy_area_cleanDevelopment:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	-0,01987	0,0215	-0,92365	0,3556914
policy_area_cleanEconomic & Monetary Affairs:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,07727	0,0215	3,59838	0,0003219
policy_area_cleanEmployment & Social Affairs:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,03781	0,0215	1,760776	0,0783102
policy_area_cleanEnvironment & Public Health:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,06107	0,0215	2,843644	0,0044701
policy_area_cleanFisheries:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,07478	0,0215	3,482366	0,0004994
policy_area_cleanForeign & Security Policy:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,10174	0,0215	4,73745	2,197E-06
policy_area_cleanGender Equality:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,0117	0,0215	0,545016	0,5857557
policy_area_cleanIndustry, Research & Energy:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,10758	0,0215	5,009707	5,555E-07
policy_area_cleanInternal Market & Consumer Protection:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,0694	0,0215	3,231673	0,0012351
policy_area_cleanInternational Trade:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,13046	0,0215	6,074871	1,291E-09
policy_area_cleanLegal Affairs:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,05787	0,0215	2,694616	0,00706
policy_area_cleanPetitions:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,03355	0,0215	1,562215	0,1182725
policy_area_cleanRegional Development:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,05349	0,0215	2,490753	0,0127651
policy_area_cleanTransport & Tourism:epg_ideologyGreen/Left	0,08145	0,0215	3,792982	0,0001498

Table 11.: Regression results regarding the impact of the correlation between European Party Groups and Policy areas on defection rates in EP9.

MEPs	Country of C	NP	EPG	Total Vote	Defection Vote	Defection Rat
KOLAKUŠIĆ, Mislav	Croatia	-	NI	13189	11247	0,852756085
SINČIĆ, Ivan Vilibor	Croatia	Živi Zid	NI	12276	9186	0,748289345
NIKOLAOU-ALAVANC	Greece	Communist P	NI	12302	8783	0,713948951
PAPADAKIS, Kostas	Greece	Communist P	NI	12221	8710	0,712707634
UHRÍK, Milan	Slovakia	Hnutie Repub	NI	12793	6996	0,546861565
LAGOS, Ioannis	Greece	Independent	NI	8930	4873	0,54568869
MEUTHEN, Jörg	Germany	Independent	NI	13366	6839	0,511671405
RADAČOVSKÝ, Miroslav	Slovakia	Slovak PATRIC	NI	12793	6440	0,503400297
de GRAAFF, Marcel	Netherlands	Partij voor de	IDG	11841	5682	0,47985812
ROOKEN, Rob	Netherlands	JA21	ECR	12589	5737	0,455715307
ROOS, Robert	Netherlands	JA21	ECR	13301	5982	0,449740621
ROOKMAKER, Dorien	Netherlands		ECR	12321	5438	0,441360279
HOOGEVEEN, Michiel	Netherlands	JA21	ECR	6049	2646	0,437427674
RIVIÈRE, Jérôme	France		NI	12604	5467	0,43375119
BAY, Nicolas	France		NI	12955	5602	0,432419915
BUSCHMANN, Martin	Germany	Independent	NI	12287	5308	0,432001302
DONATO, Francesca	Italy	Independent	NI	12695	5484	0,431981095
PIRBAKAS, Maxette	France		NI	11799	5081	0,430629714
COLLARD, Gilbert	France		NI	11789	5057	0,428959199
LUNDGREN, Peter	Sweden	Sverigedemok	ECR	13370	5670	0,42408377
KOFOD, Peter	Denmark	Dansk Folkep	IDG	13409	5628	0,4197181
STEGRUD, Jessica	Sweden	Sverigedemok	ECR	13170	5514	0,418678815
DAVID, Ivan	Czech Republic	Svoboda a pří	IDG	12869	5383	0,41829202
WEIMERS, Charlie	Sweden	Sverigedemok	ECR	13168	5472	0,415552855
KONSTANTINOOU, Athina	Greece	Independent	NI	10380	4304	0,414643545
SONNEBORN, Martin	Germany	Die PARTEI	NI	13106	5130	0,391423775
VUOLO, Lucia	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	13384	5202	0,388673042
REGIMENTI, Luisa	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	13284	5143	0,387157483
ŽDANOKA, Tatjana	Latvia	Latvijas Krievu	NI	12739	4787	0,375775179
BLAŠKO, Hynek	Czech Republic	Svoboda a pří	IDG	12900	4722	0,366046512
PUIGDEMONT I CASAS	Spain	Junts per Cata	NI	12753	4661	0,365482632
COMÍN I OLIVERES, Ferran	Spain	Junts per Cata	NI	12781	4661	0,36468195
PONSATÍ OBIOLS, Clara	Spain	Junts per Cata	NI	12671	4602	0,36319154
BOURGEOIS, Geert	Belgium	Nieuw-Vlaam	ECR	12872	4617	0,358685519
MADISON, Jaak	Estonia	Eesti Konserv	IDG	12734	4516	0,354641118
KANKO, Assita	Belgium	Nieuw-Vlaam	ECR	13345	4731	0,3545148
VAN OVERTVELDT, Joke	Belgium	Nieuw-Vlaam	ECR	12969	4574	0,352687177
BERG, Lars Patrick	Germany	Liberal-Conse	ECR	12990	4479	0,344803695
CAROPPO, Andrea	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	13407	4611	0,343924815
JURZYCA, Eugen	Slovakia	Sloboda a Soli	ECR	13433	4539	0,337899203
USPASKICH, Viktor	Lithuania	Darbo partija	NI	11611	3838	0,330548618
DE MAN, Filip	Belgium	Vlaams Belan	IDG	13010	4282	0,329131437
HUHTASAARI, Laura	Finland	Perussuomala	IDG	13349	4376	0,327814818
HAKKARAINEN, Teuvo	Finland	Perussuomala	IDG	12031	3909	0,324910647
ANNEMANS, Gerolf	Belgium	Vlaams Belan	IDG	12564	3998	0,318210761
GYÖNGYÖSI, Márton	Hungary	JOBBIK MAGY	NI	12833	4011	0,312553573
VANDENDRIESSCHE, Vincent	Belgium	Vlaams Belan	IDG	13405	4170	0,311077956
MAYER, Georg	Austria	Freiheitliche	PIDG	13262	4121	0,310737445
VILIMSKY, Harald	Austria	Freiheitliche	PIDG	13413	4157	0,309923209
HAIDER, Roman	Austria	Freiheitliche	PIDG	13432	4160	0,30970816
KRAH, Maximilian	Germany	Alternative für	IDG	12023	3717	0,309157448

BECK, Gunnar	Germany	Alternative für IDG	13282	3996	0,300858304
BUCHHEIT, Markus	Germany	Alternative für IDG	13138	3950	0,30065459
KUHS, Joachim	Germany	Alternative für IDG	13224	3973	0,300438596
REIL, Guido	Germany	Alternative für IDG	12850	3857	0,300155642
ZIMNIOK, Bernhard	Germany	Alternative für IDG	13289	3959	0,297915569
ANDERSON, Christine	Germany	Alternative für IDG	12698	3772	0,297054654
FEST, Nicolaus	Germany	Alternative für IDG	13325	3958	0,297035647
LIMMER, Sylvia	Germany	Alternative für IDG	13138	3891	0,2961638
MILAZZO, Giuseppe	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia ECR	12174	3584	0,294397897
GIARRUSSO, Dino	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13279	3907	0,294223963
FERRARA, Laura	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13285	3881	0,292133986
PIGNEDOLI, Sabrina	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	12963	3763	0,290287742
RONDINELLI, Daniela	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13329	3858	0,289444069
GEMMA, Chiara	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13381	3871	0,289290785
BEGHIN, Tiziana	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13426	3877	0,288768062
FUORE, Mario	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13352	3845	0,287971839
CASTALDO, Fabio Maria	Italy	Movimento 5 NI	13036	3694	0,283369132
SOFO, Vincenzo	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia ECR	12212	3341	0,273583361
PIMENTA LOPES, João	Portugal	Partido Comunista The Left	3881	1028	0,264880186
FRAGKOS, Emmanouel	Greece	Elliniki Laïki ECR	12851	3093	0,240681659
YENBOU, Salima	France	Europe Écologie REG	12963	3118	0,240530741
ADINOLFI, Isabella	Italy	Forza Italia EPP	13376	3168	0,236842105
BRUNA, Annika	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12981	3053	0,235189893
ROUGÉ, André	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	11116	2581	0,232187837
JUVIN, Herve	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	11811	2707	0,229193125
JAMET, France	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12731	2917	0,229125756
MÉLIN, Joëlle	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12587	2883	0,229045841
BEIGNEUX, Aurélie	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12937	2946	0,227718946
JALKH, Jean-François	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12709	2894	0,227712645
BILDE, Dominique	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	13113	2984	0,227560436
ANDROUËT, Mathilde	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12622	2872	0,227539217
BARDELLA, Jordan	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12818	2913	0,227258543
MARIANI, Thierry	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12854	2920	0,227166641
LACAPELLE, Jean-Lin	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12231	2773	0,226718993
JORON, Virginie	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12949	2935	0,226658429
LEBRETON, Gilles	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	13268	3007	0,226635514
LECHANTEUX, Julie	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	11756	2664	0,22660769
GRISSET, Catherine	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	13172	2982	0,226389311
LAPORTE, Hélène	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	13170	2978	0,22611997
GARRAUD, Jean-Paul	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12235	2765	0,225991009
OLIVIER, Philippe	France	Rassemblement démocratique IDG	12594	2843	0,225742417
van DALEN, Peter	Netherlands	ChristenUnie EPP	13205	2957	0,223930329
ZAHRADIL, Jan	Czech Republic	Občanská demokratická strana ECR	13071	2904	0,222171219
KONEČNÁ, Kateřina	Czech Republic	Komunistická strana The Left	13271	2919	0,219953282
PEREIRA, Sandra	Portugal	Partido Comunista The Left	12793	2792	0,218244352
VREČIONOVÁ, Veronika	Czech Republic	Občanská demokratická strana ECR	13417	2916	0,217336215
ŽURIŠ NICHOLSONO	Slovakia	Independent REG	13409	2880	0,214781117
TOŠENOVSKÝ, Evžen	Czech Republic	Občanská demokratická strana ECR	13219	2817	0,213102353
GEUKING, Helmut	Germany	Familien-Partei EPP	10860	2298	0,21160221
PIETIKÄINEN, Sirpa	Finland	Kansallinen Kokoomus EPP	12643	2646	0,209285771
BONFRISCO, Anna	Italy	Lega IDG	12643	2623	0,207466582
DELI, Andor	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12914	2667	0,206520056
TÓTH, Edina	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12892	2642	0,204933292
JÁRÓKA, Livia	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12191	2494	0,204577147
VONDRA, Alexandr	Czech Republic	Občanská demokratická strana ECR	13277	2700	0,203359193
BOCSKOR, Andrea	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	13102	2661	0,203098764
GÁL, Kinga	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	13017	2639	0,202734885
GYÓRI, Enikő	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12969	2625	0,202405737
KÓSA, Ádám	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12358	2498	0,202136268
TRÓCSÁNYI, László	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12372	2493	0,201503395
DEUTSCH, Tamás	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12446	2506	0,201349831
GYÜRK, András	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12336	2477	0,200794423
SCHALLER-BAROSS, Erőss	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	7201	1417	0,196778225
HIDVÉGI, Balázs	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar Nemzeti	12097	2361	0,195172357
MELBÄRDE, Dace	Latvia	Nacionālā apvienība ECR	13119	2554	0,194679473

ARIMONT, Pascal	Belgium	Christlich Sozi	EPP	13417	2580	0,192293359
TERHEȘ, Cristian	Romania	Partidul Națio	ECR	11404	2147	0,188267275
LUTGEN, Benoît	Belgium		EPP	13138	2473	0,188232608
KNOTEK, Ondřej	Czech Republic	Ano 2011	REG	13364	2504	0,187369051
RUISSSEN, Bert-Jan	Netherlands	Staatskundig G	ECR	13333	2457	0,184279607
KYRTSOS, Georgios	Greece	Independent	REG	13231	2425	0,183281687
DE LA PISA CARRIÓN	Spain	Vox	ECR	12635	2295	0,181638306
BUXADÉ VILLALBA, Jc	Spain	Vox	ECR	12829	2326	0,181307974
TERTSCH, Hermann	Spain	Vox	ECR	13247	2368	0,178757455
GANCIA, Gianna	Italy	Lega	IDG	13082	2329	0,178030882
AGUILAR, Mazaly	Spain	Vox	ECR	13047	2309	0,17697555
PANZA, Alessandro	Italy	Lega	IDG	13370	2299	0,171952132
ZULLO, Marco	Italy	Independent	REG	12984	2217	0,170748614
LIZZI, Elena	Italy	Lega	IDG	13291	2261	0,170115115
CASANOVA, Massimo	Italy	Lega	IDG	13113	2217	0,169068863
CONTE, Rosanna	Italy	Lega	IDG	13448	2269	0,168723974
TARDINO, Annalisa	Italy	Lega	IDG	13085	2207	0,168666412
DREOSTO, Marco	Italy	Lega	IDG	12904	2175	0,168552387
CIOCCA, Angelo	Italy	Lega	IDG	12811	2151	0,167902584
CECCARDI, Susanna	Italy	Lega	IDG	12975	2176	0,167707129
DA RE, Gianantonio	Italy	Lega	IDG	13344	2231	0,167191247
TOVAGLIERI, Isabella	Italy	Lega	IDG	13215	2208	0,16708286
RINALDI, Antonio M	Italy	Lega	IDG	13349	2219	0,16622968
CAMPOMENOSI, Ma	Italy	Lega	IDG	13440	2227	0,165699405
ZANNI, Marco	Italy	Lega	IDG	13406	2216	0,16529912
THUN UND HOHENS	Poland		REG	10077	1663	0,165029275
ADINOLFI, Matteo	Italy	Lega	IDG	13379	2206	0,164885268
ZAMBELLI, Stefania	Italy	Lega	IDG	13409	2206	0,16451637
GRANT, Valentino	Italy	Lega	IDG	13043	2143	0,164302691
SARDONE, Silvia	Italy	Lega	IDG	13256	2177	0,16422752
BORCHIA, Paolo	Italy	Lega	IDG	13373	2183	0,163239363
BASSO, Alessandra	Italy	Lega	IDG	13232	2151	0,162560459
BIZZOTTO, Mara	Italy	Lega	IDG	13454	2171	0,16136465
BALDASSARRE, Simo	Italy	Lega	IDG	13379	2153	0,160923836
HLAVÁČEK, Martin	Czech Republic	Ano 2011	REG	13271	2130	0,160500339
LANCINI, Danilo Osce	Italy	Lega	IDG	13320	2135	0,160285285
SANT, Alfred	Malta	Partit Laburist	S&D	13059	2065	0,158128494
CHARANZOVÁ, Dita	Czech Republic	Ano 2011	REG	13446	2126	0,158113937
DE BASSO, Ilan	Sweden	Arbetspartiet	S&D	2299	361	0,157024793
DLABAJOVÁ, Martina	Czech Republic	Ano 2011	REG	13222	2063	0,156027832
BELLAMY, François-X	France	Les Républicain	EPP	13343	2081	0,155961928
HAZEKAMP, Anja	Netherlands	Partij voor de The	Le	13327	2067	0,155098672
CHRISTENSEN, Asger	Denmark	Venstre, Dan	REG	13319	2049	0,153840378
WIEZIK, Michal	Slovakia	Progresívne S	REG	13401	2054	0,153272144
LØKKEGAARD, Mort	Denmark	Venstre, Dan	REG	13116	1997	0,152256786
HÖLVÉNYI, György	Hungary	Fidesz-Magyar	EPP	12078	1831	0,151597947
SØGAARD-LIDELL, Lir	Denmark	Venstre, Dan	REG	12455	1883	0,151184263
KOVAŘÍK, Ondřej	Czech Republic	Ano 2011	REG	13095	1977	0,150973654
GADE, Søren	Denmark	Venstre, Dan	REG	13041	1963	0,150525266
BERLATO, Sergio	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	ECR	12643	1868	0,147749743
FIOCCHI, Pietro	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	ECR	13149	1924	0,146322914
MAXOVÁ, Radka	Czech Republic	Independent	S&D	13379	1955	0,146124524
FITTO, Raffaele	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	ECR	13118	1900	0,144839152
STANCANELLI, Raffae	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	ECR	13345	1926	0,144323717
FIDANZA, Carlo	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	ECR	13273	1912	0,144051835
PROCCACCINI, Nicola	Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	ECR	13317	1902	0,142824961
LALUCQ, Aurore	France	Place publique	S&D	13333	1685	0,126378159
FUGLSANG, Niels	Denmark	Socialdemokr.	S&D	12933	1610	0,124487745
VILLUMSEN, Nikolaj	Denmark	Enhedslisten	The Le	12889	1588	0,123205834
WIESNER, Emma	Sweden	Centerpartiet	REG	7206	885	0,122814321
DURAND, Pascal	France	Liste Renaissance	REG	13442	1641	0,122080048
VIND, Marianne	Denmark	Socialdemokr.	S&D	13121	1599	0,121865711
RINZEMA, Catharina	Netherlands	Volkspartij vo	REG	1947	237	0,121725732
SCHALDEMOSE, Chri	Denmark	Socialdemokr.	S&D	13436	1635	0,121688002
CALENDA, Carlo	Italy	Azione	REG	12937	1548	0,119656798
WALSH, Maria	Ireland	Fine Gael Part	EPP	13345	1579	0,118321469
GROOTHUIS, Bart	Netherlands	Volkspartij vo	REG	12527	1457	0,116308773
LEXMANN, Miriam	Slovakia	Kresťanskodem	EPP	12698	1475	0,116160025
AL-SAHLANI, Abir	Sweden	Centerpartiet	REG	13134	1519	0,115654028
BJÖRK, Malin	Sweden	Vänsterpartiet	The Le	13372	1544	0,115465151
MACMANUS, Chris	Ireland	Sinn Féin	The Le	12516	1443	0,115292426
NAGTEGAAL, Carolin	Netherlands	Volkspartij vo	REG	13427	1546	0,115141134
ZĪLE, Roberts	Latvia	Nacionālā apv	ECR	13108	1505	0,11481538
HUITEMA, Jan	Netherlands	Volkspartij vo	REG	13019	1491	0,114524925
AZMANI, Malik	Netherlands	Volkspartij vo	REG	13208	1486	0,112507571
GLUCKSMANN, Raph	France	Place publique	S&D	13287	1492	0,112290208
MAUREL, Emmanuel	France	Gauche républ	The Le	13078	1462	0,111790794
JAKELIŪNAS, Stasys	Lithuania	Independent	Green	11021	1224	0,111060702

HORTEFEUX, Brice	France	Les Républicains	EPP	13394	1470	0,109750635
MORANO, Nadine	France	Les Républicains	EPP	13244	1445	0,10910601
COLIN-OESTERLE, Na	France	Les centristes	EPP	13169	1421	0,107904928
BOTENGA, Marc	Belgium	Parti du Trava	The Le	13433	1446	0,107645351
CUTAJAR, Josianne	Malta	Partit Laburist	S&D	13277	1424	0,107253145
SANDER, Anne	France	Les Républicains	EPP	13209	1405	0,106366871
FRANSSSEN, Cindy	Belgium	Christen-Dem	EPP	13014	1379	0,105962809
VINCZE, Loránt	Romania	Uniunea Dem	EPP	13286	1406	0,105825681
CLUNE, Deirdre	Ireland	Fine Gael Part	EPP	12609	1328	0,105321596
DANJEAN, Arnaud	France	Les Républicains	EPP	13400	1410	0,105223881
DIDIER, Geoffroy	France	Les Républicains	EPP	13212	1390	0,105207387
FITZGERALD, France	Ireland	Fine Gael Part	EPP	13358	1403	0,105030693
NIEDERMAYER, Ludé	Czech Republic	TOP 09 a Star	EPP	13416	1406	0,104800239
VANDENKENDELAER	Belgium	Christen-Dem	EPP	7068	736	0,104131296
MARKEY, Colm	Ireland	Fine Gael Part	EPP	8574	889	0,103685561
KELLY, Seán	Ireland	Fine Gael Part	EPP	13441	1379	0,102596533
EROGLU, Engin	Germany	Freie Wähler	REG	13379	1366	0,102100306
NOVAKOV, Andrey	Bulgaria	Citizens for Eu	EPP	13353	1328	0,099453306
MODIG, Silvia	Finland	Vasemmistoli	The Le	12631	1223	0,096825271
GEORGIOU, Giorgos	Cyprus	Progressive P	The Le	13200	1276	0,096666667
OETJEN, Jan-Christo	Germany	Freie Demokr	REG	13339	1287	0,096483994
KÖRNER, Moritz	Germany	Freie Demokr	REG	12849	1238	0,09634991
KARLSBRO, Karin	Sweden	Liberalerna	REG	13330	1284	0,096324081
AGIUS SALIBA, Alex	Malta	Partit Laburist	S&D	13032	1243	0,095380602
HAHN, Svenja	Germany	Freie Demokr	REG	13334	1268	0,095095245
BEER, Nicola	Germany	Freie Demokr	REG	13420	1275	0,095007452
GLÜCK, Andreas	Germany	Freie Demokr	REG	13248	1258	0,094957729
LARROUTOUROU, Pier	France	Nouvelle Don	S&D	13118	1239	0,094450374
HÜBNER, Danuta Ma	Poland	Platforma Ob	EPP	13309	1234	0,092719213
LEGA, David	Sweden	Kristdemokra	EPP	13131	1216	0,092605285
SKYTTEDEL, Sara	Sweden	Kristdemokra	EPP	9683	896	0,092533306
AUBRY, Manon	France	La France Insc	The Le	12813	1174	0,091625693
MEBAREK, Nora	France	Parti Socialist	S&D	12585	1153	0,091617004
POLČÁK, Stanislav	Czech Republic	Starostové a r	EPP	12811	1168	0,091171649
WALLACE, Mick	Ireland	Independents The	Le	13031	1186	0,091013736
BOMPARD, Manuel	France	La France Insc	The Le	12362	1125	0,091004692
CHAIBI, Leila	France	La France Insc	The Le	13386	1209	0,090318243
EVREN, Agnès	France	Les Républicains	EPP	13127	1180	0,089891064
PELLETIER, Anne-Sop	France	La France Insc	The Le	13441	1205	0,089651068
ANDRIEU, Eric	France	Parti Socialist	S&D	12798	1116	0,087201125
DALY, Clare	Ireland	Independents The	Le	13236	1149	0,086808704
KIZILYÜREK, Niyazi	Cyprus	Progressive P	The Le	13045	1132	0,086776543
GRAPINI, Maria	Romania	Partidul Puter	S&D	13409	1157	0,086285331
GUILLAUME, Sylvie	France	Parti Socialist	S&D	13207	1127	0,085333535
BILČÍK, Vladimír	Slovakia	SPOU – občia	EPP	13383	1142	0,085332138
HEINÄLUOMA, Eero	Finland	Suomen Sosia	S&D	13067	1113	0,085176399
ZDECHOVSKÝ, Tomáš	Czech Republic	Křesťanská a c	EPP	12908	1099	0,085140998
PEDICINI, Piericola	Italy	Independent	Green	13421	1123	0,083674838
KANEV, Radan	Bulgaria	Democrats fo	EPP	13266	1109	0,083597166
OMARJEE, YOUNOUS	France	La France Insc	The Le	13216	1103	0,083459443
MANDL, Lukas	Austria	Österreichisch	EPP	13424	1119	0,083358164
ALEXANDROV YORD	Bulgaria	Union of Dem	EPP	12834	1065	0,082982702
INCIR, Evin	Sweden	Arbetareparti	S&D	13434	1110	0,082626172
ŠOJĐROVÁ, Michael	Czech Republic	Křesťanská a c	EPP	12923	1060	0,082024298
MÜLLER, Ulrike	Germany	Freie Wähler	REG	13413	1098	0,081860881
FRITZON, Heléne	Sweden	Arbetareparti	S&D	13431	1094	0,081453354
HOJŠÍK, Martin	Slovakia	Progresívne S	REG	13104	1067	0,081425519
D'AMATO, Rosa	Italy	Independent	Green	13344	1085	0,081309952
SALINI, Massimiliano	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	13453	1090	0,08102282
POLFJÄRD, Jessica	Sweden	Moderaterna	EPP	13150	1060	0,080608365
ČÍŽ, Miroslav	Slovakia	SMER-Sociáln	S&D	10683	858	0,080314518
DONÁTH, Anna Júlia	Hungary	Momentum	REG	13055	1044	0,07996936
TOBÉ, Tomas	Sweden	Moderaterna	EPP	13283	1061	0,079876534
EVI, Eleonora	Italy	Europa Verde	Green	13400	1066	0,079552239
WARBORN, Jörgen	Sweden	Moderaterna	EPP	13402	1064	0,079391136
POSPÍŠIL, Jiří	Czech Republic	TOP 09 a Star	EPP	12621	995	0,078836859
GUTELAND, Jytte	Sweden	Arbetareparti	S&D	13253	1043	0,078699162
ŠTEFANEČ, Ivan	Slovakia	Kresťanskode	EPP	13338	1048	0,0785725
KOKALARI, Arba	Sweden	Moderaterna	EPP	11150	874	0,07838565
CORRAO, Ignazio	Italy	Independent	Green	13277	1037	0,078104994
KOKKALIS, Petros	Greece	Coalition of th	The Le	13127	1025	0,07808334
BERGKVIST, Erik	Sweden	Arbetareparti	S&D	13041	1017	0,077984817
CSEH, Katalin	Hungary	Momentum	REG	13009	1009	0,077561688
RADEV, Emil	Bulgaria	Citizens for Eu	EPP	12412	960	0,077344505
ARENA, Maria	Belgium	Parti Socialist	S&D	13240	997	0,075302115
SLABAKOV, Andrey	Bulgaria	VMRO	ECR	12724	956	0,075133606
ZVER, Milan	Slovenia	Slovenska den	EPP	13304	999	0,075090198
DZHAMBASZKI, Angel	Bulgaria	VMRO	ECR	13176	989	0,075060716
KOUNTOURA, Elena	Greece	Coalition of th	The Le	13285	996	0,074971773
GEORGIOULIS, Alexis	Greece	Coalition of th	The Le	13044	969	0,074287029
MELCHIOR, Karen	Denmark	Det Radikale	REG	12262	909	0,074131463
POLLÁK, Peter	Slovakia	Obyčajní ľud	EPP	13006	960	0,073812087
HRISTOV, Ivo	Bulgaria	Bulgarian Soci	S&D	12000	880	0,073333333
ARVANITIS, Konstant	Greece	Coalition of th	The Le	12874	929	0,072160945
KOULOULO, Stelios	Greece	Coalition of th	The Le	12666	913	0,072082741
PAPADIMOULIS, Dim	Greece	Coalition of th	The Le	13201	941	0,071282479
KELLEHER, Billy	Ireland	Fianna Fáil Pa	REG	13193	930	0,070491928
TOMASHEVSKI, Valder	Lithuania	Lietuvos lenk	ECR	13163	916	0,069588999
SCHMIEDTBAUER, Sil	Austria	Österreichisch	EPP	13441	934	0,069488877
THALER, Barbara	Austria	Österreichisch	EPP	13433	933	0,069455818
OCHOJSKA, Janina	Poland	Independent	EPP	9441	647	0,068530876
KATAINEN, Eisi	Finland	Suomen Keski	REG	13248	907	0,068463164
BERNHUBER, Alexani	Austria	Österreichisch	EPP	13310	910	0,068369647
FLANAGAN, Luke Mir	Ireland	Independent	The Le	13336	899	0,067411518
TAJANI, Antonio	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	13167	887	0,067365383
TARABELLA, Marc	Belgium	Parti Socialist	S&D	12961	873	0,067355914
PEKKARINEN, Mauri	Finland	Suomen Keski	REG	13372	894	0,066856117
ADAMOWICZ, Magd	Poland	Independent	EPP	12615	839	0,066508125
WINZIG, Angelika	Austria	Österreichisch	EPP	13421	891	0,066388496
SAGARTZ, Christian	Austria	Österreichisch	EPP	12179	803	0,065933164
NOICHL, Maria	Germany	Sozialdemokr	S&D	13139	863	0,06568232
MARTUSCIELLO, Fulv	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	13311	874	0,06565998
PATRICIELLO, Aldo	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	11724	765	0,065250768

ADEMOV, Asim	Bulgaria	Citizens for Eu	EPP	12891	834	0,0646963
ANDREWS, Barry	Ireland	Fianna Fáil Pa	REG	12674	816	0,064383778
BENJUMEA BENJUM	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	13215	849	0,064245176
ŁUKACIJEWSKA, Elżbi	Poland	Platforma Oby	EPP	13005	832	0,063975394
REGO, Sira	Spain	Izquierda Unir The Le		13351	850	0,063665643
BRGLEZ, Milan	Slovenia	Socialni demo S&D		13168	837	0,063563183
ŠIMEČKA, Michal	Slovakia	Progresívne SI	REG	13154	830	0,063098677
VIRKKUNEN, Henna	Finland	Kansallinen Kc	EPP	12662	793	0,062628337
HANSEN, Christophe	Luxembourg	Parti chrétien	EPP	13312	829	0,062274639
DE MEO, Salvatore	Italy	Forza Italia	EPP	12447	775	0,062263999
SOKOL, Tomislav	Croatia	Hrvatska dem	EPP	13267	819	0,061732117
REPASI, René	Germany	Sozialdemokr	S&D	1576	97	0,061548223
WEISS, Pernille	Denmark	Det Konservat	EPP	13110	804	0,061327231
ZOVKO, Željana	Croatia	Hrvatska dem	EPP	13100	803	0,06129771
PINEDA, Manu	Spain	Izquierda Unir The Le		12629	770	0,060970782
NART, Javier	Spain	Independient	REG	12589	767	0,060926205
WISELER-LIMA, Isabe	Luxembourg	Parti chrétien	EPP	13428	816	0,060768543
FOURLAS, Loucas	Cyprus	Democratic R	EPP	13198	800	0,060615245
BUDA, Daniel	Romania	Partidul Națio	EPP	13329	794	0,05956936
ANDROULAKIS, Niko	Greece	PASOK-KINAL	S&D	12504	744	0,05950096
BILBAO BARANDICA,	Spain	Partido Nacio	REG	13298	791	0,059482629
RESSLER, Karlo	Croatia	Hrvatska dem	EPP	12669	743	0,058647091
KOVATCHEV, Andrey	Bulgaria	Citizens for Eu	EPP	13117	763	0,058168789
DORFMANN, Herber	Italy	Südtiroler Vol	EPP	13306	771	0,057943785
MELO, Nuno	Portugal	Partido do Ce	EPP	12669	734	0,057936696
HAJŠEL, Robert	Slovakia	Independent	S&D	13148	761	0,057879525
GROŠELJ, Klemen	Slovenia	Lista Marjana	REG	13442	773	0,057506323
MATO, Gabriel	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	12550	721	0,057450199
LÓPEZ GIL, Leopoldo	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	13350	757	0,05670412
GLAVAK, Sunčana	Croatia	Hrvatska dem	EPP	12869	729	0,056647758
ZOIDO ÁLVAREZ, Jua	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	13394	748	0,055845901
PEREIRA, Lúcia	Portugal	Partido Social	EPP	13385	747	0,055808741
RAFAELA, Samira	Netherlands	Democraten	REG	13274	737	0,055522073
RQUET, Dominique	France	Mouvement R	REG	13455	744	0,055295429
GUETTA, Bernard	France	Liste Renaissa	REG	13173	725	0,055036818
TORVALDS, Nils	Finland	Svenska folkp	REG	13334	733	0,054972251
WINKLER, Iuliu	Romania	Uniunea Dem	EPP	12976	712	0,05487053
LUCKE, Karsten	Germany	Sozialdemokr	S&D	1847	101	0,05468327
TOMC, Romana	Slovenia	Slovenska der	EPP	13153	709	0,053904052
MONTERRAT, Dolor	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	13377	718	0,053674217
CHRISTOFOROU, Lefi	Cyprus	Democratic R	EPP	13340	715	0,053598201
BARRENA ARZA, Perr	Spain	EH BILDU	The Le	13194	704	0,053357587
KALINOWSKI, Jarosław	Poland	Polskie Stronn	EPP	13282	708	0,053305225
KYUCHYUK, Ilhan	Bulgaria	Movement fo	REG	13158	700	0,053199574
CANFIN, Pascal	France	Liste Renaissa	REG	13282	706	0,053154645
KAILI, Eva	Greece	Panhellenic Sc	S&D	12274	652	0,053120417
MIHAYLOVA, Iskra	Bulgaria	Movement fo	REG	13184	699	0,053018811
GUSMÃO, José	Portugal	Bloco de Esqu	The Le	12910	683	0,052904725
ARIAS ECHEVERRÍA,	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	13344	701	0,052532974
MAYDELL, Eva	Bulgaria	Citizens for Eu	EPP	12757	670	0,052520185
MATIAS, Marisa	Portugal	Bloco de Esqu	The Le	13105	688	0,052499046
BĂSESCU, Traian	Romania	Partidul Mișca	EPP	13168	691	0,052475699
TOMAC, Eugen	Romania	Partidul Mișca	EPP	13216	693	0,052436441
CHABAUD, Catherine	France	Mouvement C	REG	13392	701	0,052344683
ALIEVA-VELI, Atidzhe	Bulgaria	Movement fo	REG	13181	689	0,05227221
RÓNAI, Sándor	Hungary	Demokratikus	S&D	12879	672	0,052177964
DOBREV, Klára	Hungary	Demokratikus	S&D	12299	640	0,052036751
KÖSTER, Dietmar	Germany	Sozialdemokr	S&D	12450	647	0,051967871
ARA-KOVÁCS, Attila	Hungary	Demokratikus	S&D	12953	673	0,051957076
ESTARÀS FERRAGUT,	Spain	Partido Popul	EPP	12909	669	0,051824309
TOOM, Yana	Estonia	Eesti Keskerak	REG	13385	692	0,051699664
MOLNÁR, Csaba	Hungary	Demokratikus	S&D	12884	665	0,051614405
ENGERER, Cyrus	Malta	Partit Laburist	S&D	8668	446	0,051453623
PETERSEN, Morten	Denmark	Det Radikale	REG	12828	660	0,051449953
FALCĂ, Gheorghe	Romania	Partidul Națio	EPP	13274	682	0,051378635

TERRAS, Riho	Estonia	Isamaa EPP	12589	645	0,051235205
del CASTILLO VERA, I	Spain	Partido Popul: EPP	12812	655	0,051123946
CIUHODARU, Tudor	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	12968	661	0,050971622
GIESEKE, Jens	Germany	Christlich Dem EPP	13101	666	0,050835814
TOIA, Patrizia	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13206	669	0,050658791
DECERLE, Jérémy	France	Liste Renaissa REG	13428	679	0,050565982
GARCÍA-MARGALLO	Spain	Partido Popul: EPP	12751	643	0,050427417
TOLLERET, Irène	France	Liste Renaissa REG	12382	624	0,050395736
CASA, David	Malta	Partit Nazzjon EPP	13203	665	0,050367341
BRAUNSBERGER-REI	Germany	Christlich Dem EPP	2744	138	0,050291545
SCHREIJER-PIERIK, A	Netherlands	Christen Dem EPP	12533	628	0,050107716
KARAS, Othmar	Austria	Österreichisch EPP	12294	611	0,04969904
JARUBAS, Adam	Poland	Polskie Stronn EPP	13075	649	0,049636711
METSOLA, Roberta	Malta	Partit Nazzjon EPP	10893	537	0,049297714
GRUDLER, Christoph	France	Mouvement C REG	13173	649	0,049267441
LAURETI, Camilla	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	2061	101	0,049005337
JOVEVA, Irena	Slovenia	Lista Marjana REG	13224	645	0,048774955
MAVRIDES, Costas	Cyprus	Democratic P: S&D	12673	618	0,048765091
KELLER, Fabienne	France	Agir - La Droite REG	13361	651	0,048723898
FARRENG, Laurence	France	Mouvement C REG	13419	653	0,048662344
TRILLET-LENOIR, Véro	France	Liste Renaissa REG	12947	630	0,048659921
VEDRENNE, Marie-Pi	France	Mouvement C REG	13303	647	0,048635646
BRUNET, Sylvie	France	Mouvement C REG	12605	612	0,048552162
LEWANDOWSKI, Jan	Poland	Platforma Ob: EPP	13045	633	0,048524339
HETMAN, Krzysztof	Poland	Polskie Stronn EPP	13330	645	0,048387097
ZARZALEJOS, Javier	Spain	Partido Popul: EPP	13330	644	0,048312078
AMARO, Álvaro	Portugal	Partido Social EPP	12714	613	0,048214567
KARLESKIND, Pierre	France	La République REG	13075	630	0,048183556
TUDOSE, Mihai	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	12539	603	0,048089959
YON-COURTIN, Stéphi	France	Liste Renaissa REG	13208	635	0,048076923
HAYER, Valérie	France	La République REG	13311	639	0,048005409
NEMEC, Matjaž	Slovenia	Socialni demo S&D	375	18	0,048
AVRAM, Carmen	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	13022	625	0,0479957
MARINESCU, Marian	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	13368	641	0,047950329
VITANOV, Petar	Bulgaria	Bulgarian Soci S&D	12520	595	0,047523962
MANDERS, Antonius	Netherlands	Christen Dem EPP	13183	623	0,047257832
LOISEAU, Nathalie	France	Liste Renaissa REG	13233	625	0,047230409
LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHIT	Spain	Partido Popul: EPP	12904	609	0,047194668
BIJOUX, Stéphane	France	La République REG	13228	623	0,047097067
KEMPA, Beata	Poland	Solidarna Pols ECR	13168	619	0,047007898
MONTEIRO DE AGUI	Portugal	Partido Social EPP	12934	608	0,047007886
BOYER, Gilles	France	REG	13217	619	0,046833623
SMERIGLIO, Massimi	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	12706	594	0,046749567
CICUREL, Ilana	France	Liste Renaissa REG	12273	573	0,046687851
MILLÁN MON, Franci	Spain	Partido Popul: EPP	13306	619	0,046520367
BURKHARDT, Delara	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13117	610	0,046504536
FERNANDES, José M:	Portugal	Partido Social EPP	13415	623	0,046440552
DUDA, Jarosław	Poland	Platforma Ob: EPP	13342	619	0,046394843
PAET, Urmas	Estonia	Eesti Reformie REG	12684	587	0,046278776
RANGEL, Paulo	Portugal	Partido Social EPP	13284	614	0,046221018
BEŇOVÁ, Monika	Slovakia	SMER-Sociáln: S&D	12952	597	0,046093267
PIEPER, Markus	Germany	Christlich Dem EPP	13111	603	0,045991915
OLBRYCHT, Jan	Poland	Platforma Ob: EPP	13157	604	0,045907122
URBÁN CRESPO, Mig	Spain	ANTICAPITALI The Le	13360	607	0,045434132
ROPĖ, Bronis	Lithuania	Lietuvos valsti Greens	13414	607	0,04525123
SCHOLZ, Helmut	Germany	DIE LINKE. The Le	13103	591	0,045104175

COZZOLINO, Andrea	Italy	Partito DemocS&D	12518	561	0,044815466
BOGDAN, Ioan-Rareș	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	11671	523	0,044811927
GOZI, Sandro	France	Liste Renaissa REG	12656	567	0,044800885
SARVAMAA, Petri	Finland	Kansallinen Kc EPP	13046	583	0,044688027
KUMPULA-NATRI, Mi	Finland	Suomen Sosia S&D	12138	542	0,044653155
ANSIP, Andrus	Estonia	Eesti Reformi REG	13324	592	0,044431102
YONCHEVA, Elena	Bulgaria	Bulgarian Soci S&D	12582	558	0,04434907
ERTUG, Ismail	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13160	582	0,044224924
MAŽYLIS, Liudas	Lithuania	Tėvynės sąjun EPP	13445	592	0,044031238
SCHIEDER, Andreas	Austria	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13404	589	0,043942107
VOLLATH, Bettina	Austria	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13140	577	0,04391172
SIDL, Günther	Austria	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12890	566	0,043910008
SIKORSKI, Radosław	Poland	Platforma Oby EPP	13018	569	0,043708711
HAVA, Mircea-Gheor	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	12887	560	0,043454644
REGNER, Evelyn	Austria	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13365	580	0,043396932
HEIDE, Hannes	Austria	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13428	581	0,043267799
IN 'T VELD, Sophia	Netherlands	Democraten 6 REG	13432	580	0,043180465
ARŁUKOWICZ, Barto	Poland	Platforma Oby EPP	13305	572	0,042991357
BLAGA, Vasile	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	13325	571	0,042851782
MAJORINO, Pierfran	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13376	572	0,042763158
ANGEL, Marc	Luxembourg	Parti ouvrier s S&D	12916	548	0,042427996
PENKOVA, Tsvetelina	Bulgaria	Bulgarian Soci S&D	12651	535	0,042289147
LENAERS, Jeroen	Netherlands	Christen Dem: EPP	13433	567	0,042209484
BERENDSEN, Tom	Netherlands	Christen Dem: EPP	13087	549	0,041950027
BARTOLO, Pietro	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13406	561	0,041846934
da Graça CARVALHO	Portugal	Partido Social EPP	13353	558	0,041788362
ERNST, Cornelia	Germany	DIE LINKE. The Le	13114	544	0,041482385
GAMON, Claudia	Austria	NEOS – Das N REG	13125	543	0,041371429
VILLANUEVA RUIZ, Id	Spain	PODEMOS The Le	13355	549	0,041108199
de LANGE, Esther	Netherlands	Christen Dem: EPP	13051	532	0,04076316
RODRÍGUEZ PALOP, I	Spain	PODEMOS The Le	13385	545	0,040717221
DANTI, Nicola	Italy	Italia Viva REG	13443	547	0,040690322
SPUREK, Sylwia	Poland	Independent Greens	13439	542	0,040330382
STANISHEV, Sergei	Bulgaria	Bulgarian Soci S&D	12268	492	0,040104336
JUKNEVIČIENĖ, Rasa	Lithuania	Tėvynės sąjun EPP	13059	520	0,039819282
DEMIREL, Özlem	Germany	DIE LINKE. The Le	13249	527	0,039776587
KUBILIUS, Andrius	Lithuania	Tėvynės sąjun EPP	13121	518	0,039478698
SÉJOURNÉ, Stéphane	France	La République REG	13453	522	0,038801754
KYMPPOUROPOULOS	Greece	Nea Demokra: EPP	12890	500	0,03878976
KRASNODĘBSKI, Zdz	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12535	481	0,038372557
BUȘOI, Cristian-Silviu	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	12071	463	0,038356391
GUALMINI, Elisabet	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13370	512	0,03829469
BENEA, Adrian-Drag	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	12645	482	0,038117833
NOVAK, Ljudmila	Slovenia	Nova Slovenij: EPP	13224	504	0,038112523
PICIERNO, Pina	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13320	503	0,037762763
NISTOR, Gheorghe-V	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	12627	476	0,037696998
MOTREANU, Dan-Ște	Romania	Partidul Națio EPP	12976	489	0,037684957
KOPACZ, Ewa	Poland	Platforma Oby EPP	13389	497	0,037120024
WÖLKEN, Tiemo	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13222	490	0,037059446
UJHELYI, István	Hungary	Magyar Szoci S&D	12504	462	0,036948177
HALICKI, Andrzej	Poland	Platforma Oby EPP	13077	483	0,036935077
BERLUSCONI, Silvio	Italy	Forza Italia EPP	7765	286	0,036831938
LANGE, Bernd	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12080	443	0,036672185
FRANKOWSKI, Toma	Poland	Platforma Oby EPP	12932	474	0,036653263
KAMMEREVERT, Petr	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	13206	483	0,036574284
NEGRESCU, Victor	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	12634	462	0,036567991
VAIDERE, Inese	Latvia	Partija 'VIENO EPP	13392	489	0,036514337
BAUZÁ DÍAZ, José Ra	Spain	Ciudadanos – REG	13209	481	0,036414566
BUZEK, Jerzy	Poland	Platforma Oby EPP	12129	438	0,036111798
PISAPIA, Giuliano	Italy	Independent S&D	12783	459	0,035907064
BENIFEI, Brando	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13434	482	0,035879113
GOERENS, Charles	Luxembourg	Parti démocra REG	13324	477	0,03580006
SPYRAKI, Maria	Greece	Nea Demokra: EPP	12924	461	0,035670071
PLUMB, Rovana	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	13002	462	0,035532995
BULLMANN, Udo	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12455	442	0,035487756
LIESE, Peter	Germany	Christlich Dem EPP	13067	463	0,03543277
CREȚU, Corina	Romania	PRO Romania S&D	12934	457	0,03533323
NICA, Dan	Romania	Partidul Social S&D	12537	441	0,035175879
BOGOVIČ, Franc	Slovenia	Slovenska ljud EPP	13125	461	0,03512381
NIEBLER, Angelika	Germany	Christlich-Sozi EPP	13070	456	0,034889059
KREHL, Constanze	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12452	434	0,034853839
DE CASTRO, Paolo	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13148	458	0,034834195
DOLESCHAL, Christia	Germany	Christlich-Sozi EPP	13322	463	0,034754541
SCHWAB, Andreas	Germany	Christlich Dem EPP	13092	455	0,034754048
MORTLER, Marlene	Germany	Christlich-Sozi EPP	13158	455	0,034579723
AUŠTREVICIUS, Petra	Lithuania	Lietuvos Resp REG	13443	463	0,034441717
SIPPEL, Birgit	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12608	430	0,03410533
HOHLMEIER, Monika	Germany	Christlich-Sozi EPP	13221	446	0,033734211
ROBERTI, Franco	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	12661	424	0,033488666
BARLEY, Katarina	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12606	422	0,033476122
KEFALOGIANNIS, Ma	Greece	Nea Demokra: EPP	12946	431	0,033292137
GEIER, Jens	Germany	Sozialdemokr: S&D	12467	412	0,033047245
MICHELS, Martina	Germany	DIE LINKE. The Le	12503	411	0,032872111

FERRANDINO, Giuseppe	Italy	Partito Democratico	S&D	13341	438	0,032831122
SCHUSTER, Joachim	Germany	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	S&D	11983	389	0,032462655
SOLÍS PÉREZ, Susana	Spain	Ciudadanos	REG	13415	431	0,032128215
STRUGARIU, Ramona	Romania	Uniunea Salva Romaniaa	REG	13254	424	0,031990343
ILČIĆ, Ladišlav	Croatia		ECR	4036	129	0,031962339
MORETTI, Alessandro	Italy	Partito Democratico	S&D	13332	425	0,031878188
ASIMAKOPOULOU, Anna	Greece	Nea Demokratia	EPP	13215	419	0,031706394
VÁZQUEZ LÁZARA, Ana	Spain	Ciudadanos	REG	12630	400	0,031670625
SCHNEIDER, Christin	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	12987	411	0,031647032
TINAGLI, Irene	Italy	Partito Democratico	S&D	13372	421	0,031483697
PEKSA, Mikuláš	Czech Republic	PIRÁTI	Greens	12962	404	0,03116803
JAHR, Peter	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13073	404	0,030903389
GREGOROVÁ, Markéta	Czech Republic	PIRÁTI	Greens	12767	394	0,030860813
RADTKE, Dennis	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13332	411	0,030828083
AGUILERA, Clara	Spain	Partido Socialista	S&D	13381	412	0,030789926
MANDA, Claudiu	Romania	Partidul Social Democrat	S&D	10145	312	0,030754066
BISCHOFF, Gabriele	Germany	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	S&D	13380	410	0,03064275
KALJURAND, Marina	Estonia	Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond	S&D	12822	385	0,030026517
MUREȘAN, Siegfried	Romania	Partidul Național Liberal	EPP	13366	400	0,02992668
KOLAJA, Marcel	Czech Republic	PIRÁTI	Greens	13454	401	0,029805262
MEIMARAKIS, Vangelis	Greece	Nea Demokratia	EPP	13393	399	0,029791682
CAÑAS, Jordi	Spain	Ciudadanos	REG	13272	395	0,029761905
VERHEYEN, Sabine	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13383	397	0,0296645
DUPONT, Lena	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	12786	379	0,029641796
PAPADAKIS, Demetris	Cyprus	Movement for Social Justice	S&D	13035	385	0,029535865
ZAGORAKIS, Theodoros	Greece	Nea Demokratia	EPP	12536	370	0,029514997
VOZEMBERG-VRIONI, Vasiliki	Greece	Nea Demokratia	EPP	12452	366	0,029392869
HERBST, Nicolas	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13315	388	0,029140068
SIMON, Sven	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13020	379	0,029109063
LINS, Norbert	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13406	389	0,029016858
G. DALUNDE, Jakob	Sweden	Miljöpartiet de Grönarna	Greens	12402	358	0,028866312
LIBERADZKI, Bogusław	Poland		S&D	12902	370	0,028677724
BENTELE, Hildegard	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	12906	370	0,028668836
PAGAZAURTUNDÚA, Iñaki	Spain	Delegación del Gobierno en Navarra	REG	13397	384	0,028663134
RIES, Frédérique	Belgium	Mouvement Réformateur	REG	13112	374	0,02852349
FERBER, Markus	Germany	Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst	EPP	12907	366	0,028356706
RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS, María	Spain	Ciudadanos	REG	13048	365	0,027973636
KOHUT, Łukasz	Poland		S&D	13306	372	0,027957312
CHINNICI, Caterina	Italy	Partito Democratico	S&D	13338	368	0,027590343
GARICANO, Luis	Spain	Ciudadanos	REG	13197	364	0,027582026
BALT, Marek Paweł	Poland		S&D	12785	351	0,027454048
SILVA PEREIRA, Pedro	Portugal	Partido Socialista	S&D	13295	360	0,027077849
CARÉME, Damien	France	Europe Écologie	Greens	12932	350	0,027064646
CASPARY, Daniel	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13190	356	0,026990144
EHLER, Christian	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13192	355	0,026910249
WIELAND, Rainer	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	12935	348	0,02690375
VAN BREMPT, Kathleen	Belgium	Socialistische Partij	S&D	13351	359	0,026889372
GAHLER, Michael	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13180	354	0,026858877
ȘTEFĂNUȚĂ, Nicolae	Romania	Uniunea Salva Romaniaa	REG	13125	351	0,026742857
HOLMGREN, Pär	Sweden	Miljöpartiet de Grönarna	Greens	13367	357	0,026707563
BREYER, Patrick	Germany	Piratenpartei	Greens	12398	328	0,02645588
SEMEDO, Monica	Luxembourg	Indépendant	REG	13204	347	0,026279915
WEBER, Manfred	Germany	Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst	EPP	12690	331	0,02608353
BIEDROŃ, Robert	Poland		S&D	13347	348	0,026073275
SEEKATZ, Ralf	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13334	347	0,026023699
GONZÁLEZ PONS, Esteban	Spain	Partido Popular	EPP	12004	312	0,025991336
AMERIKS, Andris	Latvia	Gods kalpot Rīcība	S&D	12368	321	0,025954075
RIVASI, Michèle	France	Europe Écologie	Greens	12899	332	0,025738429
WALSMANN, Marion	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13366	344	0,025736944
VOSS, Axel	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13197	339	0,025687656
BERGER, Stefan	Germany	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	EPP	13077	332	0,025388086
TANG, Paul	Netherlands	Partij van de Arbeid	S&D	13095	332	0,025353188
CUFFE, Ciarán	Ireland	Green Party	Greens	13347	338	0,025324043
KALNIETE, Sandra	Latvia	Partija "Vienotība"	EPP	13290	335	0,025206922
URTASUN, Ernest	Spain	Catalunya en Comú	Greens	13325	327	0,024540338
JONGERIUS, Agnes	Netherlands	Partij van de Arbeid	S&D	13154	321	0,024403223
TAX, Vera	Netherlands	Partij van de Arbeid	S&D	12384	302	0,024386305
ALFONSI, François	France	Régions et Peuples	Greens	13006	317	0,024373366
BOTOȘ, Vlad-Marius	Romania	Uniunea Salva Romaniaa	REG	13219	322	0,024358877
UŠAKOVŠ, Nils	Latvia	"Saskaņa" sociālais pārstāvis	S&D	12422	301	0,024231203
SCHIRDEWAN, Marti	Germany	DIE LINKE	The Left	11072	268	0,024205202
CHAHIM, Mohammed	Netherlands	Partij van de Arbeid	S&D	13377	322	0,024071167
JURGIEL, Krzysztof	Poland	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	ECR	13139	315	0,023974427
WOLTERS, Lara	Netherlands	Partij van de Arbeid	S&D	13426	321	0,023908834
MALDEIKIENĖ, Aušra	Lithuania	Independent	EPP	13375	319	0,023850467

TOUSSAINT, Marie	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13254	316	0,023841859
MIKSER, Sven	Estonia	Sotsiaaldemol S&D	13432	319	0,023749256
McALLISTER, David	Germany	Christlich Derr EPP	13054	308	0,023594301
SATOURI, Mounir	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13275	311	0,023427495
O'SULLIVAN, Grace	Ireland	Green Party Greens	13366	309	0,02311836
WASZCZYKOWSKI, W	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13191	304	0,023046016
KUHNKE, Alice	Sweden	Miljöpartiet de Greens	13051	300	0,022986744
RIPA, Manuela	Germany	Ökologisch-De Greens	10971	251	0,022878498
CORMAND, David	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13279	302	0,022742676
CIMOSZEWICZ, Włod	Poland	Sojusz Lewicy S&D	13282	299	0,02251167
CHASTEL, Olivier	Belgium	Mouvement RREG	13453	302	0,022448524
ILABS, Ivars	Latvia	Attīstībai/Par! REG	13063	293	0,022429763
PÎSLARU, Dragoș	Romania	Uniunea Salva REG	13305	298	0,022397595
TUDORACHE, Dragoș	Romania	Uniunea Salva REG	12792	281	0,021966854
ZORRINHO, Carlos	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13421	293	0,021831458
KRUK, Elżbieta	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13244	286	0,021594684
GRUFFAT, Claude	France	Europe Écolog Greens	12681	272	0,021449413
BITEAU, Benoît	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13407	285	0,021257552
GÁLVEZ MUÑOZ, Lin	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13272	282	0,02124774
CZARNECKI, Ryszard	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13231	277	0,020935681
DELLI, Karima	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13200	273	0,020681818
MILLER, Leszek	Poland	S&D	13203	271	0,020525638
VAUTMANS, Hilde	Belgium	Open Vlaamse REG	13432	274	0,020399047
JADOT, Yannick	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13185	266	0,020174441
ROOSE, Caroline	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13223	265	0,020040838
MALDONADO LÓPEZ	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13344	263	0,019709233
MOŹDŻANOWSKA, A	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12928	251	0,019415223
FOTYGA, Anna	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13217	254	0,019217674
BONAFÈ, Simona	Italy	Partito Democ S&D	13421	256	0,019074585
DELBOS-CORFIELD, C	France	Europe Écolog Greens	13363	254	0,019007708
BELKA, Marek	Poland	S&D	13095	248	0,018938526
CIOLOȘ, Dacian	Romania	Uniunea Salva REG	12954	245	0,018913077
HAUTALA, Heidi	Finland	Vihreä liitto Greens	12918	240	0,018578727
CARVALHAIS, Isabel	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13249	242	0,018265529
RODRÍGUEZ-PIÑERO	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13061	238	0,018222188
GONZÁLEZ CASARES	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13188	240	0,018198362
JAKI, Patryk	Poland	Solidarna Pols ECR	13034	236	0,018106491
REUTEN, Thijs	Netherlands	Partij van de F S&D	6032	109	0,018070292
WIŚNIEWSKA, Jadwiga	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13380	240	0,01793722
KLOC, Izabela-Heleni	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13221	237	0,017926027
MAESTRE MARTÍN D	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13142	234	0,017805509
ZAŁEWSKA, Anna	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13354	236	0,017672607
SZYDŁO, Beata	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13397	235	0,017541241
GHEORGHE, Vlad	Romania	Uniunea Salva REG	8536	148	0,017338332
RZOŃCA, Bogdan	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13271	230	0,017331023
LEITÃO-MARQUES, N	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13214	226	0,017103072
FLEGO, Valter	Croatia	Istarski demok REG	13448	228	0,016954194
GARDIAZABAL RUBIA	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13409	226	0,016854352
PORĘBA, Tomasz P	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12570	211	0,016785998
PICULA, Tonino	Croatia	Socijaldemokr S&D	13133	218	0,016599406
VERHOFSTADT, Guy	Belgium	Open Vlaamse REG	12817	211	0,016462511
GARCÍA DEL BLANCO	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13203	217	0,016435659
FERNÁNDEZ, Jonás	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13325	217	0,016285178
BIELAN, Adam	Poland	ECR	13342	217	0,016264428
PIZARRO, Manuel	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13171	212	0,016095968
TARCZYŃSKI, Domin	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12573	202	0,016066174
KUŹMIUK, Zbigniew	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13391	213	0,015906206
SARYUSZ-WOLSKI, J	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12031	190	0,015792536
SANTOS, Isabel	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13173	205	0,015562135
RUIZ DEVESA, Domèn	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13346	207	0,015510265
CERDAS, Sara	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13387	207	0,015462762
LEGUTKO, Ryszard A	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12636	195	0,015432099
METZ, Tilly	Luxembourg	Déi Gréng - Le Greens	13284	203	0,015281542
KARSKI, Karol	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12523	191	0,015251936
GONZÁLEZ, Mónica S	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	12909	196	0,015183206
BRICMONT, Saskia	Belgium	Ecologistes Cc Greens	13266	199	0,015000754
GARCÍA MUÑOZ, Isal	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13424	200	0,014898689
MAZUREK, Beata	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13427	200	0,01489536
ŻŁOTOWSKI, Kosma	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13344	198	0,014838129
LÓPEZ AGUILAR, Juan	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13292	197	0,014820945
RAFALSKA, Elżbieta	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13380	198	0,014798206
KOPCIŃSKA, Joanna	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	12766	188	0,014726618

BRUDZIŃSKI, Joachin	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13044	192	0,014719411
TOBISZOWSKI, Grzeg	Poland	Prawo i Spraw ECR	13315	193	0,014494931
LUENA, César	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13414	193	0,014387953
MITUȚA, Alin	Romania	Uniunea Salva REG	7835	111	0,014167198
BORZAN, Biljana	Croatia	Socijaldemokr S&D	13356	189	0,014150943
LÓPEZ, Javi	Spain	Partit dels Soc S&D	13161	180	0,013676772
SÁNCHEZ AMOR, Na	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13336	182	0,013647271
HOMS GINEL, Alicia	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13309	178	0,013374408
MORENO SÁNCHEZ,	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13413	175	0,013047044
RIBA I GINER, Diana	Spain	Esquerra Repi Greens	13131	171	0,013022618
ALAMETSÄ, Alviina	Finland	Vihreä liitto Greens	12219	153	0,012521483
DURÁ FERRANDIS, Es	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13222	164	0,01240357
OLEKAS, Juozas	Lithuania	Lietuvos socia S&D	13167	162	0,012303486
LAGODINSKY, Sergey	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12662	152	0,012004423
JERKOVIĆ, Romana	Croatia	Socijaldemokr S&D	12310	147	0,011941511
BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ, Vilija	Lithuania	Lietuvos socia S&D	13035	155	0,011891063
LAMBERTS, Philippe	Belgium	Ecologistes Co Greens	13269	154	0,011605999
ROS SEMPERE, Marc	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	12176	137	0,011251643
MATIĆ, Predrag Fred	Croatia	Socijaldemokr S&D	13079	145	0,011086475
LANGENSIEPEN, Katr	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12872	141	0,010954009
BÜTIKOFER, Reinhar	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	12277	125	0,01018164
AUKEN, Margrete	Denmark	Socialistisk Fo Greens	12475	121	0,009699399
PETER-HANSEN, Kira	Denmark	Socialistisk Fo Greens	13355	125	0,00935979
SOLÉ, Jordi	Spain	Esquerra Repi Greens	11104	103	0,009275937
BOESELAGER, Damia	Germany	Volt Greens	12884	118	0,009158646
MARQUES, Margarid	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	13389	119	0,008887893
MARQUES, Pedro	Portugal	Partido Sociali S&D	12976	114	0,00878545
STRIK, Tineke	Netherlands	GroenLinks Greens	12833	105	0,008182031
HERZBERGER-FOFAN	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	13308	108	0,008115419
VON CRAMON-TAUB	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12605	98	0,007774693
PAULUS, Jutta	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	13296	97	0,007295427
FRANZ, Romeo	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12621	90	0,007130972
WAITZ, Thomas	Austria	Die Grünen - I Greens	12596	88	0,006986345
NIINISTÖ, Ville	Finland	Vihreä liitto Greens	13199	86	0,006515645
SEMSROTT, Nico	Germany	Independent Greens	13036	83	0,006366984
GEESE, Alexandra	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12772	81	0,006341998
NIENAU, Niklas	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	11690	74	0,006330197
WIENER, Sarah	Austria	Die Grünen - I Greens	13176	80	0,006071645
HÄUSLING, Martin	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	12627	76	0,006018848
BLOSS, Michael	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	13068	77	0,005892256
VAN SPARRENTAK, Ki	Netherlands	GroenLinks Greens	13265	75	0,005653977
NEUMANN, Hannah	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	13022	73	0,005605898
VANA, Monika	Austria	Die Grünen - I Greens	13319	71	0,005330731
GUERREIRO, Francis	Portugal	Independente Greens	13432	71	0,005285884
DEPNAY-GRUNEN	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	13109	69	0,005263559
GARCÍA PÉREZ, Iratx	Spain	Partido Sociali S&D	13282	68	0,005119711
MARQUARDT, Erik	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	13419	65	0,004843878
KELLER, Ska	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12915	62	0,004800619
ANDRESEN, Rasmus	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	13327	63	0,004727245
REINTKE, Terry	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	13260	53	0,003996983
HAHN, Henrike	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	12851	47	0,003657303
CAVAZZINI, Anna	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	12979	46	0,003544187
GALLÉE, Malte	Germany	Bündnis 90/Di Greens	2071	7	0,00338001
FREUND, Daniel	Germany	Bündnis 90/D Greens	13402	42	0,003133861
EICKHOUT, Bas	Netherlands	GroenLinks Greens	12986	37	0,002849222
MATTHIEU, Sara	Belgium	Groen Greens	8596	22	0,00255933

Table 12.: Defection rates and absolute numbers by individual Members of the European Parliament in EP9.

Appendix 2.: Codebook

VoteWatch database collected the votes by Members of the European Parliament in all roll-call (recorded) votes between July 2019 and June 2022, as well as information about each of these votes. Link to the database: <https://simonhix.com/projects/>

For the ninth term of the EP, the codebook is as follows:

In EP7_Voted docs, EP8_Voted docs, EP9_voted docs files:

<i>Column name</i>	<i>Description</i>
Vote ID	No. of the vote (in the matching RCV file)
File	File number during EP session
Order of vote	Order of the vote on the particular file on a particular day
Date	Date of the vote
Title	Title of the file
Procedure	Procedure (see below)
Leg/Non-Leg/Bud	Simplified coding of procedure type (budgetary, leg., non-legislative)
Type of Vote	Description of the type of vote (e.g. motion, proposal etc.)
Voting Rule	Decision rule: s=simple majority, q=qualified majority (of all MEPs)
Rapporteur	Name of MEP who was the rapporteur
Code	EP document code
interinstitutional file number	Official EU institutional file number
Link	url link to vote on EP website
Committee responsible	EP committee connected to procedure (if relevant)
De	Main policy area of vote
Subject	Description of subject of vote (e.g. which paragraph or section)
Final vote?	Final vote on the procedure (1=yes, 0=no)
Am No.	Amendment number
Author	Political group sponsoring the vote
RCV	Indicating the at the vote was by "roll-call"
Vote	Outcome of the vote (+ =pass, - =fail)
Yeas	Number of YES votes
No	Number of NO votes
Abs	Number of ABSTAIN votes

Procedure codes:

ACI	Interinstitutional agreement procedure
APP	Consent procedure
AVC	Assent procedure (historic)
BUD	Budgetary procedure
BUI	Budgetary initiative
CNS	Consultation procedure
COD	Ordinary Legislative Procedure (ex Codecision)
COS	Procedure on strategic paper (historic)
DCE	Written declaration (historic)
DEA	Delegated acts procedure
DEC	Discharge procedure
IMM	Members' initiative
INI	Own-initiative procedure
INL	Legislative initiative procedure
INS	Institutional procedure
NLE	Non-legislative enactments
REG	Parliament's Rules of Procedure
RPS	Implementing acts

RSO	International organisation decision
RSP	Resolutions on topical subjects
SYN	Cooperation procedure (historic)
*	Legislative procedure where Parliament is consulted
**	Formally used for cooperation procedure
***	Legislative procedure where Parliament has co-legislative power
I	First reading
II	Second reading
III	Third reading

For reference, see the European Parliament rules of procedure:
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/lastrules/TOC_EN.html