



The electorate has given us five years to build the Europe of tomorrow. Let's not waste this chance

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The final results of yesterday's European elections are trickling in one by one, giving us a chance to set the political backdrop for the next parliament.

The much-feared triumph of the populist movement didn't happen. Some were successful in Hungary, the United Kingdom, Italy and even in France by a very small margin, but they haven't made us cave in. But rather, ironically, the leader of the British Conservatives, who will have to negotiate the country's departure from the European Union, is now part of a smaller party, the fifth political force in the English Parliament.

The Greens are the real surprise, even though it was expected. They have gained 17 seats, increasing in number from their current 50 seats to 67 in the next parliament of 2019-2024. Many young people voted green, especially in Germany where the strikes for the climate initiated by Greta Thunberg have had a clear impact by putting climate crises at the centre of the electoral campaign.

The green wave failed to cross the Alps, however. In Italy, and in many southern and eastern European countries, the 'green' dry spell continues. In Italy, they didn't even get passed the 4% threshold.

The Liberals have also been very successful. They become a decisive force, especially thanks to the French deputies of La République en Marche.

The centre-right and centre-left parties, the EPP and S&D, have held their ground, but the latter was only saved thanks to the Spanish and to the overwhelming enthusiasm in the Netherlands for Frans Timmermans.

Does this mean that there is a great deal of confusion in Europe? Not in the least. Europe of diversity has won these elections. For the first time since 1979, the date of the first European elections, the domination of the People's Party and the Socialists has come to an end. A coalition will now have to be negotiated, with at least three or possibly four political forces.

But together they could really build a win-win programme for the future of Europe. Parliament could play a central role in providing proposals and leadership. We will see in the coming days. Among those that have been elected, there are decent men and women who can succeed.

We need to have confidence in them. This could be the right moment to show great European leadership that delivers #rEUnaissance and ensures a strong sustainable development agenda.

Yes, it is also possible to fail. But I think that the level of public debate in all the capitals and the impressive growth in turnout of over 50%, never seen in over twenty years, are signals that nobody can ignore. Otherwise, next time we will have real difficulty in containing the wave of populists. So, we shouldn't waste this new chance. Let's use it to the full with the enthusiasm of our founding fathers.