

## Annex: Lead candidates for the various political groups in the European Parliament (2024)

In 2024, the lead candidate (spitzenkandidaten) system is at something of a low point. What began as a mechanism to increase citizen identification with European politics and reinforce the democratic nature of the process has now become a target of criticism from the Eurosceptic parties, who decline to take part and nominate a candidate.



### ■ **URSULA VON DER LEYEN**

**(65 years)**  
Belgium, October 8th, 1958.

Party: Christian Democratic Union of Germany. The current European Commission president is seeking a second term in the post and focusing her attention on defence, a subject she knows well having been German defence minister in Angela Merkel's government, where she also held two other portfolios between 2005 and 2019.



### ■ **NICOLAS SCHMIT**

**(71 years)**  
Luxembourg, December 10th, 1953.

Party: Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party. The current European commissioner for employment and social rights has been chosen to lead the social democrats' campaign. Previously, he served as a minister in the Juncker government in his country.



### ■ **BAS EICKHOUT**

**(48 years)**  
Netherlands, October 8th, 1976.

Party: Green Party. Trained in chemistry and environmental science, he was a researcher at the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands before officially entering politics. In 2019, he was the Greens' lead candidate alongside Ska Keller. This time, he will form a duo with Terry Reintke.



### ■ **TERRY REINTKE**

**(36 years)**  
Germany, May 9th, 1987.

Party: Alliance 90/The Greens. This political scientist, who studied at the Free University of Berlin, was a political advisor and served as the spokesperson of the Federation of Young European Greens between 2011 and 2013. In the European Parliament, she represents her group in the parliament intergroups on LGBTI rights, anticorruption and trade unions.



### ■ **WALTER BAIER**

**(70 years)**  
Austria, February 9th, 1954.

Party: Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ). An economist by training and seasoned in antifascist and pacifist activism, Baier was elected president of The Left group in December 2022. On this occasion, he was the group's only contender for lead candidate.



■ **The liberals from Renew Europe** will not be following the procedure of nominating a lead candidate, though they are opting for a joint platform called Renew Europe Now. The candidates will be Sandro Gozi (aged 56, from Italy's Italia Viva), Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmerman (aged 66, from the Free Democratic Party of Germany) and Valérie Hayer from France (aged 38, Renaissance), the current president of the Renew Europe group in the parliament.



### ■ **ANDERS VISTISEN**

**(37 years)**  
Denmark, November 12th, 1987.

Party: Danish People's Party. While the ID group rejects the lead candidate system, it has nominated this Danish far-right MEP (and current leader of the group) to represent it in the pre-election debates among candidates.



### ■ **No candidate**

The ECR group is opposed to the lead candidate system and therefore declines to nominate any candidate.

### ■ **OTHER LEAD CANDIDATES**

As well as the main parliamentary groups, there are other political parties that nominate their own lead candidates

#### ■ **European Free Alliance:**

MAYLIS ROSSBERG  
**(Germany, 23 years)**  
and RAÛL ROMEVA  
**(Spain, 52 years).**

#### ■ **European Christian Political Movement:**

VALERIU GHILEȚCHI  
**(Moldova, 64 years).**

Source: Compiled by CIDOB.