

LLYC
IDEAS

ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2024

June 9, 2024

LLORENTE Y CUENCA

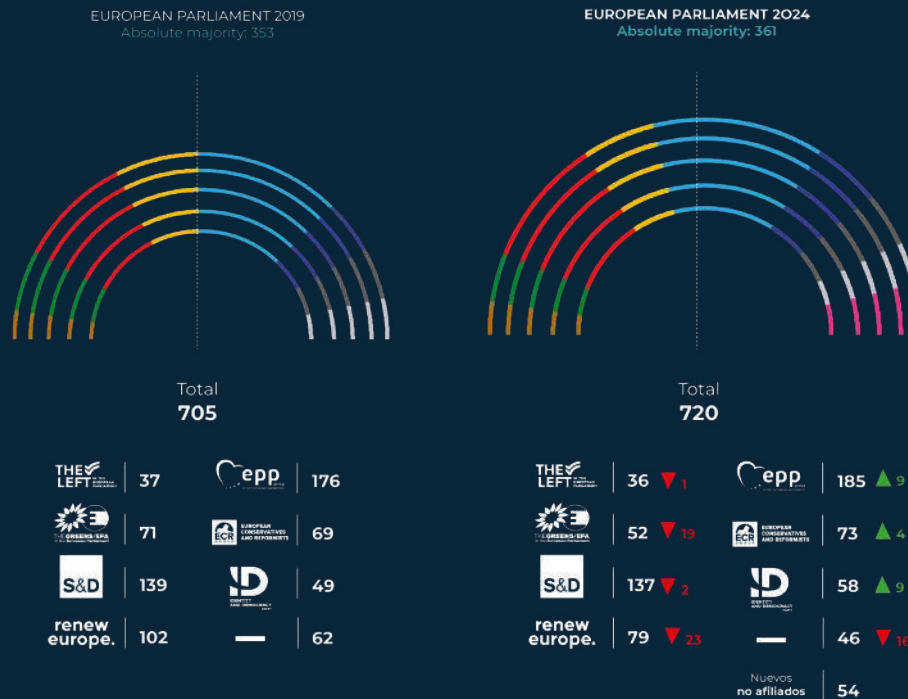
INTRODUCTION. A HISTORIC ELECTION (OR NEARLY SO)

The recent European elections, held in June 9 in most Member States, including Spain and Portugal, represent a crucial milestone for the EU. Several analysts have coincided in describing them as historic, the most relevant since the first elections by universal suffrage to the European Parliament in 1979. Whether or not one agrees with this appellation, what is certain is that the current context imposes on the new Parliament, as well as on the rest of the EU institutions, very relevant decisions in order to ensure that the EU continues to fulfill the promise of peace and shared prosperity that is its *raison d'être*.

Far from assuming the 2019-24 cycle as an exceptional juncture, everything points to a poly-crisis context as the new normal. To sum up: the rise of new players on the global chessboard is forcing Europe to take action if it does not want to see its ability to define and defend its model of society threatened. Preserving this decision-making capacity will require relevant decisions on the new goals to be prioritized and the instruments to be put in place to achieve them. These decision-making processes, which will generate a profound debate given the unequal impact on the partners, will take place in an internal context of growing social and political contestation of the forces that have traditionally defined the Union's basic consensus. **Depending on the resulting political balance, the decisions adopted will have a greater impact on some aspects or others, with potentially very significant consequences for our future.**



HOW DOES THE NEW PARLIAMENT LOOK LIKE? ELECTION RESULTS AT EU LEVEL



At the **European level**, the latest provisional results (in 26 countries and pre-election data from one as of June 10, 11.38) confirm the trend of previous polls although with slight variations:

- **European People's Party (EPP):** 185 seats (+9)
- **Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D):** 137 seats (-2)
- **Renew Europe:** 79 seats (-23)
- **Conservatives and Reformists (ECR):** 73 seats (+4)
- **Identity and Democracy (ID):** 58 seats (+9)
- **The Greens/EFA:** 52 seats (-19)
- **The Left:** 36 seats (-1)
- **NI*:** 46 seats
- **Other new parties:** 54 seats

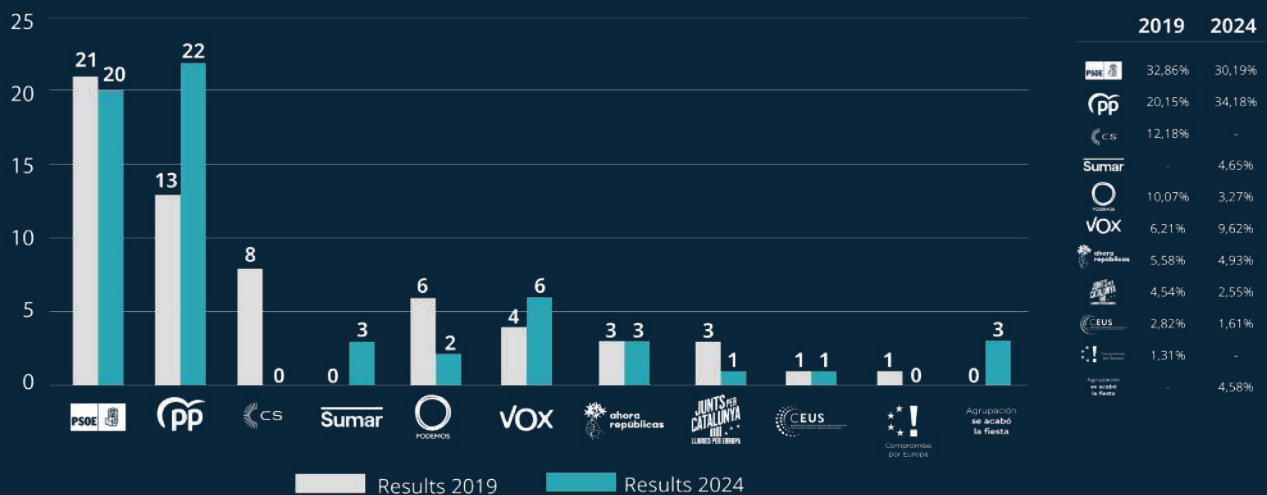
The EPP improves its results and the Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) maintains its presence in the European Parliament, although the rest of the political groups have suffered changes. The **most affected in these elections are the Liberals (RE) and the Greens/EFA group**, which obtained a much lower result than in the previous elections. On the other hand, the extreme and **populist right is the sector that grew the most**, managing to expand its support in both the ECR and ID groups.

Moreover, **despite the fact that ECR and ID grew less than expected, the rise of the extreme right is significant, since some sectors belong to the Non-registered group (NI)**, as is the case of Alternative for Germany (AfD) (15, +6) after having been expelled from ID, or Fidesz (Hungary) (10, -2).

According to the provisional results, **the most important national delegations** in the next legislature will be *Rassemblement National* (France) with 30 seats, followed by the CDU/CSU (Germany) with 29 seats; *Fratelli d'Italia* (Italy) will have 24 seats and Partido Popular (Spain) will have 22 seats. The Partito Democratico (Italy) and PSOE (Spain) tie with 20 seats, as well as Poland's Law and Justice Party (PiS), which also has 20 seats. These parties will define this balance of power, **having greater weight in the negotiations and definition of priorities** for the new institutional cycle.

ELECTION RESULTS IN KEY MEMBER STATES

SPAIN

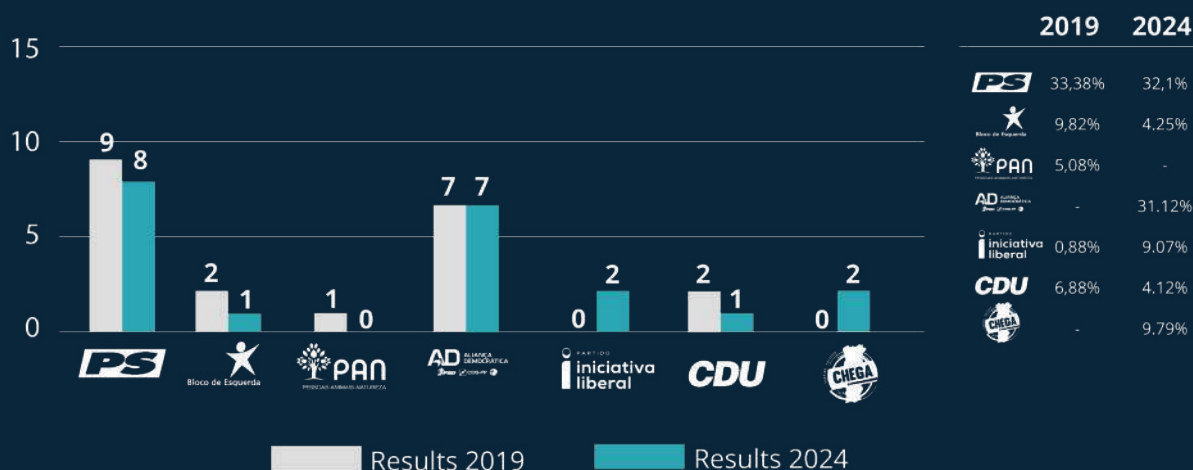


The European elections in Spain have had a **turnout of 49.21%**, eleven points lower than 2019, but above the last 3 elections where the European elections did not coincide with the municipal elections (2004, 2009, 2014). The Partido Popular has obtained a **difference of 700,000 votes and 4 percentage points** with the PSOE. Last July, the difference was only 300,000 (1.35%). **Both VOX and Sumar suffered a significant erosion** with respect to the general elections, decreasing their support by 2.77% and 7.66%, respectively. **Spain is thus one of the countries where bipartisanship is most predominant and where the presence of extreme parties is most restrained.**

- **The Popular Party (EPP) wins the European elections**, reaching 22 MEPs and 34.19% of the votes. It manages to add nine more MEPs and one and a half million voters compared to 2019. In this way, **the Spanish formation will be the second with the most weight in the European People's Group** during the next legislature.
- The **Socialist Party (S&D)**, with 30.18% of the support, adds 20 MEPs, one less than in 2019, but leaving two million votes compared to 2019. In any case, **the representation led by Teresa Ribera will be the first in the socialist family**, together with the Italian Partito Democratico.
- In third place, we find **VOX (ECR)**, which translates its slightly more than one and a half million votes (9.62%) into 6 MEPs, thus adding two more than in the last legislature. It obtains 300,000 more votes than in 2019.
- In the struggle between **Sumar (Greens/The Left) and Podemos (The Left)**, **the platform of Yolanda Díaz gets 3 MEPs** and 4.65% of the votes, while the **purple formation loses four MEPs** and more than a million and a half votes, staying with 2 representatives.
- **The coalition Ahora Repúblicas, which includes ERC, Bildu and the BNG (Greens/The Left), loses 400,000 votes, but maintains its 3 MEPs** and practically equals its percentage of votes (4.91%) of five years ago. The **coalition CEUS (Renew)**, which includes the PNV and Coalición Canaria, among other parties, **maintains the seat it held. Junts (non-attached) loses two MEPs**, with only one.
- Finally, **a new party, Se Acabó la Fiesta, achieves representation, while another party, Ciudadanos (Renew), disappears**. The grouping formed by Alvisé Pérez, of anti-system and radical nature, obtains 800,000 votes and 3 MEPs, being very close to Sumar.



PORTUGAL



- The European elections had a turnout of 37.5%, almost 7 points higher than in the last elections. These were the first elections with mobile voting, in which citizens could vote anywhere in the country and even abroad.
- Among the 21 MEPs to be elected, the right wing has grown with respect to the last elections, although not as strongly as expected.
- The Socialist Party (PS) won the elections with 32.1% of the votes, a small margin over the Coalition Aliança Democrática (AD). It will add 8 MEPs to the Socialists and Democrats Group, one less than in 2019.
- Aliança Democrática (AD), in its first test as a governing party, remains very close to the Socialists, with 31.1% of votes. It obtains 7 MEPs, the same as in 2019 obtained separately by the two largest parties of the current coalition. The Prime Minister, Luís Montenegro, has indicated that he will support the candidacy of António Costa for the presidency of the European Council.
- Chega!, an extreme right-wing party with 50 deputies in the Portuguese Parliament, has had a significant loss of votes compared to those obtained in the general elections (9.8% compared to 18% of the total vote). In its first European elections it obtained 2 MEPs.
- The Iniciativa Liberal party (IL) was the big surprise: it debuts in Europe with 2 MEPs. The party was the fourth most voted with 9.1%.
- The parties further to the left were the most penalized in these elections. Bloco de Esquerda (BE) and CDU elect one MEP (losing 1 each), Livre fails to elect despite increasing the vote and PAN (Partido Pessoas Animais Natureza) lost votes and the place it had won in 2019.

FRANCE

- The European elections had a **turnout of 51.84%**, a figure similar to the 2019 elections (50.12%). France elected **81 MEPs**, 2 more than in the previous elections.
- **The French delegation will be mostly located on the far right of the hemicycle, as Rassemblement National won the elections improving its results significantly.** It obtained 30 seats compared to 18 in 2019. This implies that Marine Le Pen's party will be the leader of the Identity and Democracy (ID) group, surpassing the Italian Lega, as well as **becoming the party with the most seats in Parliament.**
- **Emmanuel Macron's liberal coalition, until now the leading party in France, loses weight in the European Parliament.** It obtains 13 MEPs compared to 23 in 2019. **The rise of the extreme right has led Macron to announce early general elections at the end of June.** In addition, the results mean that the power France had within the Renew group may be affected.
- **The Socialist coalition managed to improve its results, obtaining 13 MEPs**, compared to 7 in 2019. **The Greens are another big loser, in line with the trend at the European level**, seeing their seats reduced by more than half (from 12 to 5). The political debate around the Green Deal as well as a better performance of other parties have made the Greens become the last national force, even behind the populist France Insoumise (the Left), which gained 9 seats (+4).

GERMANY

- **The main opposition party, the Christian Democratic CDU/CSU, gained 29 seats out of the 96 seats the country elected.** While this ensures that the German center-right will remain the largest delegation within the EPP, the increase in seats of the Polish Civic Coalition and the Spanish PP will balance to some extent the German influence in this group. The results, which make this party the undisputed

leader in votes (around 30%), confirm an adverse electoral scenario for the government coalition of Social Democrats, Liberals and Greens.

- **The extreme right-wing party, AfD, overtook the Socialists and Greens to take second place with 15 seats (+6).** The party, which has been at the center of controversy during the campaign for its political positions, was recently expelled from the European ID group, so its MEPs are for the time being included in the group of non-registered MEPs. It is not certain that the next regional elections will confirm the rise of this party.
- **The leading party of the current coalition government, the Social Democratic SPD (14, -2), obtained the worst result in its history in a European election.** In the current regional election context, these results anticipate increasing pressure on Prime Minister Scholz. In fact, the CDU has already urged him to submit to a question of confidence in view of the weakness shown by the coalition parties.
- **Against the European trend of sharp decline, in Germany the Liberals (FDP) are maintaining their representation with 5 seats.** With unfavorable electoral prospects in recent months, the party is to some extent rewarded for its highly critical stance on the impact of certain European policies, particularly environmental ones, on German business.
- **The Greens (Die Grünen) are the most affected of the day, with a reduction of 13 seats from the current 25.** A social and political conversation increasingly critical of the impact of the Green Pact on the economy, the wear and tear resulting from their participation in the German government, divisions within the party on certain issues (such as energy and foreign policy) and an electoral competition that capitalizes more effectively on discontent have taken a heavy toll on them..

ITALY

- **The winning force was *Fratelli d'Italia*, the party of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who was the lead candidate of the list for the European elections.** In line with the polls that gave it the first position (with 28% of the votes), Fratelli won 24 seats out of the total of 76 Italian MEPs. With a campaign focused on the need to reform the EU from within in order to recover greater national sovereignty, Meloni has positioned himself as a protagonist on the European scene in the face of the possibility of an eventual support of the ECR, of which Meloni is president, to von der Leyen's EPP.
- **The center-left *Partito Democratico*, a current member of S&D, obtained 20 seats (25.6% of votes),** 5 more than in the previous elections. Improving on previous polls, which gave it 21% of the vote, the results consolidate Elly Schlein as party leader.
- **Meloni's partners in the Italian government, *Forza Italia* (now a member of the EPP) and *Lega* (ID), have each obtained 8 seats, well below the rest of the main parties.** Forza's discourse, with its emphasis on Christian Democratic values and Berlusconi's legacy, has contrasted sharply with the more belligerent anti-EU rhetoric of its other two government partners.
- While in Italy both socialists and liberals have managed to improve their results, the pragmatic approach adopted by Meloni seems to have paid off. **The support obtained by the current Prime Minister confirms *Fratelli's* central role in the European ECR group and, therefore, the ability of the current Prime Minister to influence a rightward shift in the political balance of the European Parliament.**



POLAND

- **Poland's contribution to the EPP and ECR will be the same: 20 MEPs. The Civic Coalition (PO), led by Donald Tusk, the current Prime Minister, outpolled Freedom and Justice (PiS), the main opposition party, by a small margin (37.06% vs. 36.16%).** With a discourse focused on the Russian threat and the accusation of links between PiS and the Kremlin, Tusk resists in the face of Poland's high political polarization.
- **In any case, Freedom and Justice (PiS), ousted from the government in December after eight years, obtained 20 seats.** Given the 27 seats it had won in 2019, that worse performance impacts downward on ECR's power, where the party currently sits in the European Parliament. PiS has focused its campaign on the threat that the Green Deal poses to Polish agriculture.
- While the Socialists are losing weight and the Greens are leaving the Parliament, the far-right Confederation has entered it for the first time with 6 deputies, in line with the rise of these parties in the EU.
- **Tusk, with an outstanding weight within the EPP and in the front line against the growing Russian assertiveness, will be a central leader in the new European scenario.** His ascendancy over the EPP will be key in determining how this group approaches alliances in the European Parliament, the appointment

of the new Commission and, subsequently, also in defining the next agenda of priorities, particularly defense and immigration.

OTHERS

- In the **Netherlands**, the coalition of Socialists and Greens, led by former Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans, has won 9 MEPs. This is 3 more than those won by the far-right PVV party, winner of the last national elections in November and leader of the new Dutch coalition government. Despite this, the European elections confirm the strength of the latter, which is expected to add the 6 additional seats obtained to the ID group.
- In **Hungary**, *Fidesz*, the party of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, remains the leader with 10 MEPs, although the emergence of the dissident Peter Magyar (7) caused it to lose 3 seats. Given the expulsion of Fidesz from the European People's Party in 2021 for its policies contrary to the rule of law, it is to be expected that in this new legislature the party will be integrated into ECR.



CONCLUSIONS

- **The European People's Party (EPP) obtains an outstanding victory, increasing its weight by 9 MEPs.** The results obtained by the CDU/CSU in Germany, the PP in Spain and Tusk's Civic Coalition in Poland contribute significantly to this leading position.
- **Despite the fall of the German SPD, the Social Democratic Group (S&D) maintains its position in the European Parliament without major variations,** largely thanks to the results obtained by the Italian Partito Democratico and the PSOE. **Renew Liberals and the Greens suffer significant falls,** explained in part by the collapse of Macron in France and the poor results of the German Greens respectively.
- **Given these results, the pro-European majority (popular party, socialists and liberals) continues to exceed the threshold of absolute majority.** Von der Leyen already announced last night her intention to re-edit this coalition. However, the relevance that the national affiliation has over the purely ideological one in the European Parliament will force important negotiations during the next weeks in order to keep this alliance cohesive.
- **The growth experienced by ID and ECR, as well as by the non-aligned group, which includes the German AfD and Orbán's Fidesz, confirms the shift to the right of the political balance in the European Parliament.**
- **The capacity for dialogue between the leaders of the political forces will now be essential to make the new rebalancing of forces effective.** It will be the EPP who will lead this conversation, and it will have to do its utmost to gather sufficient support. It is clear that there is no alternative majority to the one defined by this group, which becomes the pivotal political force of the new Parliament.
- **In view of these results, Ursula von der Leyen, current President of the Commission, would continue to be the best positioned candidate to repeat a second term at the head of the institution.** Although the composition of the European Council would seem, a priori, to be more favorable to this candidate, in recent weeks several governments have expressed their desire to consider other candidates.
- **The scenario in the European Parliament would be more complicated for von der Leyen, where the main challenge could be the demands of socialists and liberals to repeat a great centrist coalition.** The receptiveness shown during the campaign by von der Leyen to make a pact with *Fratelli d'Italia*, the party of Giorgia Meloni, currently in the ECR group, has generated a relevant uneasiness among these groups. In the last days of the campaign, the EPP candidate recalibrated her position, with approaches to the Greens and the Liberals. In any case, von der Leyen has made it clear that she will not pact with political groups that do not mark a clear pro-European, anti-Russian and pro-NATO position. Already in 2019, Parliament forced von der Leyen to modify his original Commission plans, rejecting three commissioner nominees.
- **It will be after Parliament's approval of the College of Commissioners, towards the end of the year, that the new Commission is already in a position to define the EU's new strategic framework for 2025-29.** Based on the Strategic Agenda to be approved by the European Council in the coming weeks, on the priorities outlined by the candidate Presidency before the Parliament, on the hearings of the Commissioners and on the transition documents prepared internally by the Commission, the mission letters that the Presidency will address to the various Commissioners will serve to set out in a more concrete way where the EU's regulatory action will be heading in the coming years.

This report has been prepared by **European Affairs LLYC** area in collaboration with the **Context. Intelligence Unit** and the **Brussels and Lisbon offices.**

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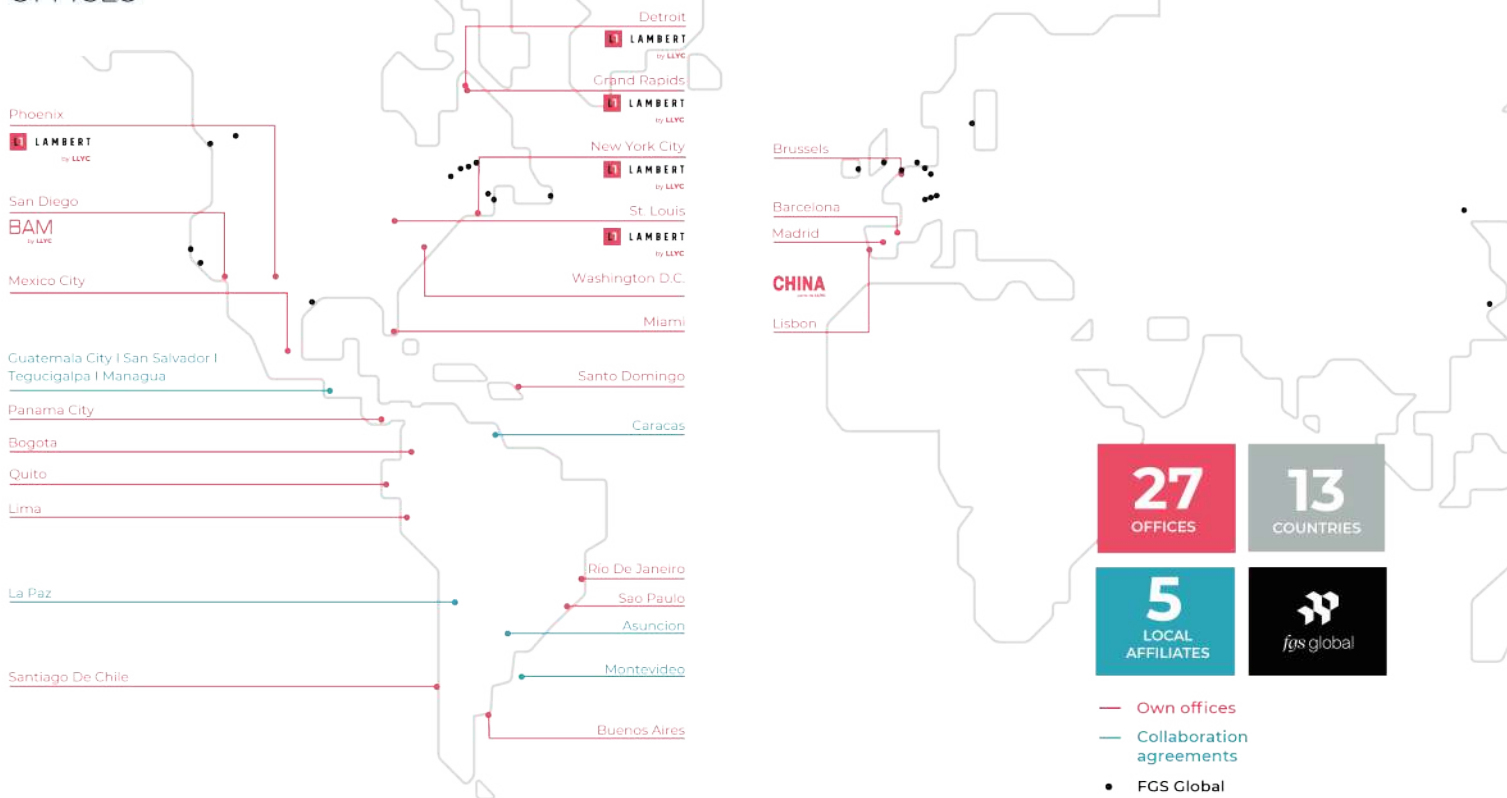
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