



[All CCS and Cross-sectoral](#) [Organisations and initiatives](#) [Advocacy Initiatives](#) [EU response](#) [Spotlight](#) [All Europe](#)
[Countries](#) [News](#) [Featured Stories](#)

"Green MEP Nela Riehl Elected Chair of EU CULT Committee"

"In a significant shift, German Green MEP Nela Riehl has been elected to lead the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee, signalling a renewed focus on progressive cultural and educational policies in the EU."

Nela Riehl, a German Member of the European Parliament from the Greens/European Free Alliance, has been elected chair of the Committee on Culture and Education. This noteworthy development occurred during the July 23, 2024, parliamentary session, reflecting evolving power dynamics within the EU legislature regarding cultural and educational policymaking.

Riehl's election victory comes amid a complex political climate, with far-right factions like Patriots for Europe vying for committee leadership roles. However, a pro-European coalition prevented far-right candidates from assuming influential positions, including in CULT.

Major European Organizations have advocated against the far right's campaign to seize the chair of the CULT committee. In a common statement on the election of the CULT Committee Chair issued by Europa Nostra, the European Cultural Foundation, and Culture Action Europe on July 15, it is stressed that:

"It is imperative that the CULT Committee continue to shape and foster cultural policies based on values of inclusion, solidarity, pluralism, liberalism, transnationalism, diversity and intercultural dialogue, respect for the rule of law and human rights."

A similar view is articulated in the electoral manifesto of the European Green Party for the 2024 European Parliament elections where it is stressed that: "We fight for a Europe of democracy, feminism and human rights" and "openness."

On June 10, right after the European elections, Culture Action Europe published an analysis stressing that the composition of the new European Parliament would influence key decisions like the election of the Commission President and the next EU budget (2028-2034), which Culture Action Europe among other organizations advocates allocating 2% to cultural initiatives.

It is worth noting that the far-right Patriots for Europe, led by National Rally's Jordan Bardella, sought to lead the CULT committee. However, a *cordon sanitaire* by the parties on the centre and Left of the spectrum blocked this development.

MEPs also elected Bogdan Zdrojewski (EPP, PL), Emma Rafowicz (S&D, FR), Diana Riba I Giner (Greens/EFA, ES) and Hristo Petrov (Renew, BG), as Vice-Chairs. You can see the full members list of the committee [here](#).

Chair Nela Riehl (Greens/EFA, DE) was elected by secret electronic vote: 18 votes in favour, 11 against and 1 abstention

1st Vice-Chair: Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski (EPP, PL), elected by acclamation

2nd Vice-Chair: Emma Rafowicz (S&D, FR), elected by acclamation

3rd Vice-Chair: Diana Riba I Giner (Greens/EFA, ES), elected by acclamation

4th Vice-Chair: Hristo Petrov (Renew, BG), elected by acclamation

The Chair presides over committee and coordinators' meetings, represents the committee both within and outside the European Parliament and presides over legislative negotiations led by the committee. Furthermore, the Chair has authority over voting procedures and rules on the admissibility of amendments.

Riehl is expected to champion intercultural cooperation while addressing concerns about media freedom and pan-European educational endeavours. She will spearhead crucial files spanning education programs like Erasmus, media freedom initiatives, and cultural funding mechanisms such as Creative Europe. Her Greens/EFA group prioritizes environmental protection, social justice, and cultural diversity.

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