EU HEADLINES

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF EUROPEAN DEBATES

Europe decides

As Europeans head to the polls this week, we take a look at timely issues surrounding the elections, and feature a bonus article from the United States to see what the Americans are hearing about all of this.

European Headlines is a weekly newsletter from the European Movement International highlighting media perspectives from across Europe. Click here to subscribe.



To the right

The long-awaited European elections week is here! On 6 June, Dutch voters kicked off the four-day elections across the 27 EU Member States. The EU's 370 million voters are called to the polls at a time of deep geopolitical uncertainty for the bloc, two and a half years after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The bulk of countries including powerhouses France and Germany will vote on Sunday, but the opening contest in the Netherlands will offer a glimpse of the strength of the far-right – whose predicted surge is the election's top issue, *Le Monde* reports. The Netherlands is just one of a long list of countries where nationalist, far-right and other Eurosceptic forces are expected to come out on top in the EU vote. Polls suggest the hard-right could grab around a quarter of the new parliament's 720 seats – significant enough to sway EU policy. This could mean bad news for climate change, support for Ukraine, and EU enlargement (to mention a few). As election Sunday approaches, the likelihood of a much more right-wing agenda for Europe is very much present.

Read the full article



The beginning of the end?

As Western leaders like Joe Biden and Emmanuel Macron gathered in Normandy this week to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, it is more about the future than the past, writes Norwegian newspaper *NRK*. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the memories and experiences of the D-Day veterans who are still alive are the very same that Ukrainian men experience at the 1,000-kilometer front that stretches across eastern Europe. Unfortunately, Russia is not the only threat to the Western heads of state who gathered in Normandy this week. As the European elections take place this week, so does the realisation that far-right parties are gaining momentum in several European countries – parties with roots that point more in the direction of the losing side of the Second World War than those present in Normandy. On the other side of the Atlantic, a storm is also brewing. The presidential election in the autumn will, regardless of the outcome, be a challenge for the world's most powerful state. As the 6th of June 1944 marked the start of the end of World War II, the 6th of June 2024 may mark the start of the end for several of the Western leaders present.

Read the full article



Divide and conquer

An opinion article in *Balkan Insight* provides a primer on the fractures within the far-right political parties and groups – predicted to do very well this weekend – hinging on their takes on EU enlargement and its very existence. While far-right forces are generally united in illiberalism and nationalism, eschewing core European values, they are divided on two major issues. The author lays out that, speaking generally, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group, including Hungary's Orbán, Italy's Meloni and Poland's Kaczyński, accept the EU as a necessity but want to dismantle and disintegrate its function, while the Identity and Democracy (ID) group, featuring France's Le Pen and the Netherlands' Wilders, are overall against enlargement and even vie for the dissolution of the EU. The various parties are also divided on their approach to Russia and Putin, and have varying takes on which candidate countries should be able to join the Union. The author goes into greater detail on these issues, but the main takeaway is that the mainstream, establishment parties of the EU have to be absolutely serious and united in their positions going forward, focus on enlargement and reform to deepen and strengthen the EU, and reject the far right, allowing them to squabble amongst themselves.

Read the full article



NeutralAIsed

A guest writer for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* makes the case that, despite the daunting power and potential of artificial intelligence, none of its abilities seem to be a threat to the integrity of this weekend's elections. Even though malicious actors in Russia, China and Iran had been using AI to produce disinformation, no readers really cared. It's not just about content but distribution and reception. Even the best AI-generated work can be detected by humans, and at this point, many people know to rely on trusted and established sources, even on social media – especially true for younger people. Deepfakes, on the other hand, still pose a threat, as deepfake audio files have been seen to even influence the Slovak election last September, for example. Though fact-checkers caught it, often some damage is already done once headlines are made and the files are circulated. Furthermore, the most effective disruption is targeted at key individuals to a movement, and the nature of the EU elections taking place across 27 countries in as many languages and with few individual figureheads makes such a plot unfeasible. Of course, these technologies and methodologies must be tracked, regulated and reined in, but the author writes that for this election, any damage is negligible.

Read the full article



BONUS: From across the pond

As we sit on pins and needles awaiting the outcome of the EU elections, November's US election nonetheless looms large. Considering the immense anxiety in Europe surrounding the idea of Donald Trump's return to the White House, your resident American thought it might be interesting to see what the US is reading about *your* elections. The United States' paper of record, *The New York Times*, featured an opinion article that stands out amongst some more dismal and US-centric coverage of the elections and the EU of late. The author, from Dutch outlet *NRC*, summarises the key issues at the heart of the election and, more broadly, examines how concepts of European citizenship and voter turnout have evolved in recent years, along with the driving factors behind this paradigm shift.

The article is behind a paywall, but you can access it by creating a free account. Alternatively, you can try translating it into, let's say, English (or your language of choice) with this nifty trick – just give it a second to load.

Read the full article

Copyright © The European Movement International, all rights reserved.
The European Movement International
Place du Luxembourg 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

This is a weekly newsletter from the European Movement International.
Click here to subscribe.