EU HEADLINES

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF EUROPEAN DEBATES

Elections, objections

This week, we take a look at the conversations surrounding ongoing and upcoming elections in France, the US, and the UK, along with a retrospective on what June's EU elections can tell us about Polish politics.

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



Bad to worse

As it is in more and more Western democracies these days, voters in France will have to choose between the lesser of evils once again, writes *Le Monde* – a familiar task for many. On Wednesday, French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said that the far-right National Rally (RN) is the only party that could win an absolute majority in the upcoming second round of legislative elections. More than 200 candidates from the centre and left have strategically withdrawn from the race – an absolute majority of 289 is needed to form a government, but the RN will try even with 270. A rumoured alternative would be a broad coalition of centrists, centre-right, Socialists, and Greens, excluding the far-left LFI – Attal has not expressed support for the idea, but other influential voices from past governments are calling for such an alliance, while RN leader Marine Le Pen called the tactics "grotesque." French President Emmanuel Macron, for his part, has not said much this week apart from possibly including LFI in a coalition; we'll see on Sunday how this all shakes out, but it is not looking good.

Read the full article



Old news

After months of speculation about US President Joe Biden's age followed by a disastrous debate performance last week against former President Donald Trump, Democrats are increasingly nervous about his ability to deliver in November's election, according to *The Irish Times*. Running damage control, his team blamed jet lag, fatigue, and a cold for his debate showing. On Wednesday, Biden was preparing for a meeting with 24 Democratic state governors on the topic when *The New York Times* reported that he had privately considered dropping out – a report that his campaign outright denied. Biden insisted that he's remaining in the race and secured the support of the governors, with some slated to join him on the campaign trail. Until they hear otherwise, the governors rumoured for the nomination are likely to continue supporting him, though others, including former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, have publicly questioned his ability. Further efforts to assuage voters include an in-depth recorded television interview scheduled for tonight and continuing to make public and campaign-related appearances, focusing on his record and reputation. Regardless, it will take a lot of work and consistency to outdo the debate, and there are still four months to go.

Read the full article



Farewell tour

It is heading towards the electoral defeat of all time for Rishi Sunak's Conservative party after the campaign has gone from bad to worse, writes Norwegian news outlet *NRK*. Sunak was popular in his role as finance minister during the pandemic, but things have drastically changed since then. What was the last straw for Britons? Well, the downfall started quite literally in the rain when a soaking wet Sunak announced that he would call elections, half a year before the deadline expired, when both he and the party were in dire straits in the opinion polls. "Things Can Only Get Wetter", wrote John Crace in *The Guardian*, calling the election announcement a kick-start for Rishi Sunak's farewell tour. And from there it only got worse. In the first debate of the election campaign, Sunak appeared on the offensive as he lashed out at Labour's leader and prime ministerial candidate Keir Starmer – it even went as far as Sunak being caught fabricating lies. Then came D-Day. The actual D-Day, 80 years after WWII. Sunak was present in France, together with other international political figures. It was just that Sunak chose to go home before the event was over. Criticism grew. No one could understand that the leader of a patriotic party could let the war veterans down like that. Or that it was possible from a communication perspective to opt out of such a moment in the middle of an election campaign; Sunak might not be the only one sacked in the end. Six weeks of an election campaign is indeed a relatively long time in the British context – especially when you're doing it uphill.

Read the full article



Battle of the giants

Now that the dust from the European elections has started to settle, it is time to reflect. In this article, *Notes of Poland* dig into the main outcomes on the Polish side of the table. The European elections on the 9th of June were the latest instalment in the country's electoral marathon that began with last October's parliamentary poll, continued through April's local elections and will culminate in next summer's crucial presidential vote. The European elections were largely framed as a test of strength between the two main parties. Donald Tusks' KO came in first with 37.1% of the votes, finishing narrowly ahead of PiS at 36.2%. This was the first election since 2014 in which KO has come out on top, ending a decade during which PiS or its candidate won the most votes in consecutive local, presidential, parliamentary, and European polls. Tusk's party was desperate to secure even the most minimal of victories after failing to knock PiS off the top spot in the local elections, when the latter defied predictions and secured the largest share of the vote in the regional assembly polls, the key barometer of national party support. Read the full article for more key takeaways.

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.