EU HEADLINES

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF EUROPEAN DEBATES

Brat summer

As we head into summer, a final look at the stories dominating international headlines over the past week.

This will be our last EU Headlines for the summer – enjoy the break and see you in September.

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



"No, grandma, brat is *good*"

US Vice President Kamala Harris has only been in the presidential campaign for a few days, and already the meme machine is whirring, writes an op-ed in *El País* that provides an overview for the less-online and generationally challenged among us. Along with her sudden thrust from the background to the spotlight have come all kinds of jokes – sometimes originally making fun of her, but the campaign has run with it. Readers may see, around social media, references to coconuts from a quote of hers in a recent speech ("You think you just fell out of a coconut tree?"), which has been embraced by some prominent Democrats and, more importantly, the youngest voting cohort, Gen Z. Videos of her sometimes odd laugh, again often meant to mock her, are also being repurposed out of support from fans and her own campaign alike. Meanwhile, artist Charli XCX (ask your nearest youngster) declared that "Kamala IS brat", which references her recent album and is meant as a term of endearment and female empowerment, and is also a great boost to the campaign. The album art is lime green with black text in Arial, and it has underscored the newest wave of memes as we're living in a brat summer. There are still three months to go and many memes to come, but she's off to a good start connecting with the young and the hip compared to her competition.

Read the full article



Bidin' his time

With Kamala off to the races, current US President Joe Biden took to the airwaves this week to finally address his long-awaited retirement from the campaign, writes *Spiegel*. Though calls for him to drop out have been growing exponentially since his disastrous debate performance at the end of June, reaching up to the highest echelons of Democratic power and many of his closest allies, Biden told his country on Wednesday that passing the torch to a new generation is the best way to unite the American people and the time has come for new and younger voices. He certainly took his time. Along with flowery words praising American exceptionalism and the privilege of serving his country for 50 years, he further endorsed his successor in the campaign, Kamala Harris, as an experienced, tough, capable politician and an "incredible partner" during their time serving together. He'll use his last five months in office to continue his work, including furthering his legislative agenda and continuing to cooperate with NATO and Ukraine, along with reforming the right-wing supermajority Supreme Court. Without a campaign to focus on, hopefully the man can get a few more things done before shuffling off to eat ice cream in Vermont.

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Locked out

All is apparently not fair in love and war. The dispute between the EU and Hungary's Council of the EU Presidency over Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's visit to Moscow continue after the re-election of Ursula von der Leyen as European Commission President, *The Brussels Times* reports. As previously reported, Hungary's Presidency got off on the wrong foot with Orbán's visit to Moscow and the cancellation of the traditional meeting with the European Commission at the start of the Presidency. EU leaders denounced his uncoordinated visit as inconsistent with the EU's position and Hungary's task as chair of the EU Presidency. The Commission President decided that the Commission will be represented at senior civil servant level only during informal meetings of the Council. The College visit to the Presidency, which the Commission previously said would take place in September, was cancelled. Someone making a slightly different stand? Ursula's no. 1 frenemy, European Council President Charles Michel, who has already distanced himself from any boycotts of Council meetings as counterproductive (even though he also denounced Orbán's trips). Orbán has admitted that he was not acting on behalf of the EU. Immediately after his trips, the Prime Minister sent a report to Michel, which was later shared with the Commission. In the letter, Orbán refers to the current US "pro-war policy" and claims that the EU has copied this policy. Orbán finishes the letter with a proposal to start peace negotiations. Time will tell what the next steps will be, but that Orbán will play a central role post recent shenanigans seems highly unlikely.

Read the full article



Data destruction

For those people who have gradually started to fear they will be replaced by robots and technology, last week's outage was a comforting reminder that they are still needed. For everyone else, it was a painful reminder just how fragile it can be. This past week's global software outage that caused global chaos was not caused by terrorists, AI or rogue hackers demanding billions in ransom. It wasn't even done as a lark by some off-the-charts smart teenager. Instead, it was a routine upgrade that somehow went off the rails, writes *The Irish Times*. CrowdStrike, a Texas company specialised in protecting corporate clients from cyberthreats, couldn't protect itself. The trouble began with a small Windows software update that CrowdStrike sent to its customers last Thursday night. For some reason, this crashed every computer it touched - affecting an estimated 8.5 million machines according to Microsoft. "The outage highlights the chaos that can happen when organisations within those sectors suffer an incident, be that an IT problem or as the result of a malicious attack," said security expert Brian Honan. And as in every sci-fi-future story, the more networked the world gets, the greater the danger.

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