European elections: Taking back control

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Opinion

Six of Europe's leading policymaking veterans pitch their visions for Europe.

EPP: Joseph Daul - A better future

After five years at the helm of the EU, the EPP will continue to lead a united Europe DURING the next mandate, says Joseph Daul, President of the European People’s Party.
Over the past five years, the EPP has showed leadership during times of crisis and turned challenging situations into successful outcomes.

As a result, more than 13 million new jobs have been created in Europe, reaching the lowest unemployment rate for almost twenty years.

Yet despite these improvements, many of our citizens don’t feel their lives have improved; they seek greater security and stability in all areas.

To address people’s fears and concerns, this is exactly what we will concentrate on during the next mandate.

Our mission for the next five years will be to offer concrete solutions to citizens’ needs because we want a prosperous Europe for all that offers everyone a better future.

We want a safer Europe that protects its citizens.

A sustainable Europe that combines green policies, job creation and defends European industries; a Europe that defends our values and our interests in the world.

We in the EPP, are ready to deliver on our promises because we believe that only by being united can we succeed.

**S&D: Udo Bullman - A fairer Europe**
Europe needs to change fundamentally, putting social, ecological and economic sustainability at its core, says Udo Bullman, S&D Group leader.

The European elections will not only draw a line between pro-European forces and those that seek to destroy Europe, but also between those who want to continue with business as usual and those who want to change Europe fundamentally.

Business as usual is not an option for us; the earth demands urgent action.

The way we produce and consume depletes our fish stocks, pollutes our air, destroys our soil and damages our health.

At the same time, we see growing inequalities, poverty and high unemployment rates in many parts of Europe.

We need to set Europe on a radically new course; we have to fight climate change and social inequalities simultaneously.

We cannot ask people to shoulder the costs of the ecological transition while the rich get richer and big companies pay close to zero taxes.

We will put our programme for a more sustainable and just Europe on the table and strike an alliance with all those that believe that social, ecological and economic sustainability must be the core of EU action in the next five years.
ECR: Peter Van Dalen - An alternative way

With populists on both sides of the political spectrum trying to lead people to the extremes, it is time for another type of politics, says Peter Van Dalen, Vice Chair of the ECR Group.

A drawn out, messy Brexit has shown that it is by no means easy to simply up and leave the EU - Brexit does not simply mean Brexit.

However, populists on both sides of the political spectrum have taken this opportunity to try and lead EU citizens to radical extremes.

My fear is that ignoring the calls for change from citizens has handed these upcoming elections on a platter to populists and nationalists.

It is not enough to simply disagree with people or say why they are wrong; we must offer an alternative way forward.

For Christen Unie-SGP, that alternative is through a style of politics that takes citizens into account, that protects the rights of people, particularly women.

An EU that does its utmost to protect the climate and an EU that stands for tax justice.

For too long we have allowed huge companies to pick and choose the Member State where they can avoid paying their fair share of Tax.

That needs to stop. These elections are a turning point in the European Project.
ALDE: Dominique Riquet - Taking back control

No single EU Member State can face the challenges of globalisation alone; we need to work collectively to protect our values and identity, says Dominique Riquet, Vice President of the ALDE Group.

The world is changing rapidly. The upcoming European elections will be crucial for our future.

As the clock ticks, we now need to decide the direction in which we collectively want to travel.

Individually, Member States have lost their ability to respond adequately to the new difficulties that globalisation presents; climate change, migration, fiscal and social dumping, the rise of belligerent competitors and terrorism.

No single Member State can face these challenges alone and this is the starting point from which we can take back control.

The EU needs to revitalise its institutions - a stronger European Parliament, with real budgetary power, legislative initiative, the end of unanimity at the Council, a directly elected President of the European Commission.

All of these elements would strengthen the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the EU.

Democracy, human rights, the rule of law and peace - Europe is one of the very few places where such a package exists. This should not be taken for granted.
Democratic and progressive forces must work together against the rise of the far right and nationalism to create a strongly united Europe, says Kostadinka Kuneva, a member of Parliament’s GUE/NGL group.

There is no doubt that the upcoming European elections will be the most important since the first were held forty years ago.

Almost a decade after the financial and sovereign debt crisis that continues to plague many EU Member States, and with the refugee crisis still in the spotlight, the very existence of the European Union is at stake.

We need to listen to the growing voices of protest that call for greater social justice and fair and inclusive growth.

This is the only way to regain the trust of European citizens and to arrest the rise of Euroscepticism and the nationalist resurgences that pose a pressing threat to European unity.

The switch to a social policy agenda that effectively tackles poverty, unemployment and marginalisation must be a priority.

Likewise, we urgently need to increase support for the European Social Fund in the EU’s budget and create a Europe-wide unemployment insurance scheme.
At the same time, we must continue fighting for the development of a fairer, more effective European asylum policy and a Europe-wide integration strategy for migrants and refugees.

**EFDD: Nigel Farage - Preparing for glory**

The UK needs a peaceful, political revolution, to define what kind of country it is and in the meantime the Brexit party will enjoy its ascent to victory, says Nigel Farage, Leader of Parliament’s EFDD Group.

In the UK, we find ourselves fighting a set of elections that we should never have been a part of. The Brexit Party will sweep the board in these elections.

There is only one way it can be stopped and that is if the governing party of Mrs May and Mr Corbyn’s opposition agree to a permanent customs union.

If that happens, the Brexit Party won’t win the European elections, but it will win the UK general election because the betrayal will be so complete.

What is happening in British politics beginning on 23 May is no longer simply about Brexit, it isn’t just about the UK leaving the EU; it’s about what kind of country the UK is.

I sense disillusionment among some in my country, but in others I sense a burning anger.

We need to sweep away the two-party system that has let us down so badly and I think you’re all going to be very, very surprised by what happens on 23 May.
About the author

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