

European elections

The European elections on the continent should be gripping and important for a change. In dispute is the future of the Eurozone and the economic policy that has brought them slow growth or no growth in the deficit regions. They need to resolve how far and how fast they intend to go in pursuit of full economic, monetary and political union. They need to have a proper argument about the German vision of an economic Europe where the weaker economies accept the discipline and the rules without receiving large transfers to ease the pain, in contrast to the southern vision of a proper transfer union where money passes from the rich regions to the poor regions to create greater equality and solidarity.

They do organise loose groupings of parties that campaign on a Europe wide basis instead of sticking to national electorates and preoccupations, but have difficulty in getting a more co-ordinated conversation about transfers, a common Finance Minister and budget across the varying countries and viewpoints that still disagree strongly about the future. The political landscape is fracturing more, with the once dominant centre left and centre right coalitions of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats no longer likely to command more than a quarter of the vote and seats each. The PR system, the complexity of the EU architecture and the angry audiences in many countries are creating a wide range of new parties and movements, mainly organised in single nations. There is no obvious parallel to En Marche in France, Cinque Stelle in Italy, Vox in Spain or France Insoumise in other countries. Each have their own populist movements with a range of views.

It should be obvious to anyone that the UK should not be joining in these elections. Our preoccupation should be orderly and speedy exit. We do not have a view or even a right to a view on how much political union the others want and need when we are meant to be on the way out. The UK government is placing us and the rest of the EU in an impossible position by delaying our exit for no good reason. We do not want to pay for the next stage of their journey so should leave it to them to battle out just how big a budget they want and who from amongst the remaining members is going to pay the bills.

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