

INFOCUS

The role of social media in the European elections

C4EP analysis on the subject – *How can social media help political campaigns?*

„During the past years, social media has grown to play a significant role in political campaigns. Ever since social media has started to be more and more relevant in everyday life, it has transformed the ways political candidates approach campaigning.

Some of the key points, in which it has caused changes are the interaction between the players of politics (meaning the candidates, voters and supporters/donors), intensification of the political competition and additional methods of fundraising.”

[click here](#)

Can social media swing the EU election?

[click here](#)

Europe’s far right uses TikTok to win youth vote

[click here](#)

Disinformation campaigns likely to undermine EU elections, experts say

[click here](#)

Hire factcheckers to fight election fake news, EU tells tech firms

[click here](#)

C4RECAP

Von der Leyen vs. everyone else in EU lead candidates’ debate – as it happened

[click here](#)

US issues hundreds of sanctions targeting Russia, takes aim at Chinese companies

[click here](#)

EU to drop rule-of-law dispute with Poland

[click here](#)

Israeli assault on Gaza city of Rafah: what we know so far

[click here](#)

Putin inaugurated as president for fifth term with Russia under tight grip

[click here](#)

Auditors tell the EU and Member States to speed up the recovery of irregular spending

[click here](#)

Eurovision 2024: Switzerland's Nemo wins the most controversial edition of the song contest

[click here](#)

North Macedonian president's inauguration revives name dispute with Greece

[click here](#)

C4REPORT

CEPS: Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the EU's 'big bang' enlargement: identifying lessons for the future – 30 April 2024

„Steven Blockmans opened the panel declaring that the EU is in enlargement mode again after the membership application by Ukraine, so it is timely to discuss the biggest enlargement to date with the economic and political transformation that it has brought.

To outline the context, Michael Emerson showed figures about autocratic tendencies in China, Russia and India, as well as democratic tendencies in Western and Eastern Europe. The latter revealed improvement in the candidate countries until the 'big bang', then some relapse and deterioration in recent years. The enlargement seemed to be unambiguously successful from the macroeconomic point of view, but much more complicated concerning the new member states' politics directly leading to autocratic issues.”

[click here](#)

EPC: The 2024 European elections: Potential outcome and consequences – 3 May 2024

„Jacki Davis opened the panel stating that many call the 2024 European elections (EE2024) the most consequential in a long time. She then warned us quoting French President Emmanuel Macron: “Europe is mortal, it can die (...) and this depends only on our choices.”

Daniela Schwarzer reminded us of the current geopolitical threats such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the perspective of the US elections and the rise of China. Forecasts have already shown a rise in the number of far-right parliamentarians. According to Schwarzer, member states and voters have to take responsibility for the EE2024.”

[click here](#)

CEPS: How could a rule of law approach to ethics help to restore institutional trust in the EU? – 13 May 2024

“The aim of the conference organized by CEPS was to identify and highlight major ethical concerns within the European Union and propose comprehensive reforms to address them. Speakers tried to examine the current challenges facing EU institutions, understand the deficiencies in ethical mechanisms, and formulate recommendations to strengthen

ethical governance, with a focus on the Qatargate scandal and the European Commission's proposal for an interinstitutional ethics body. This proposed body aims to standardize ethical standards across EU institutions, covering areas such as gifts, transparency in meetings with interest groups, financial disclosure, and post-employment activities. However, participants noted that while the establishment of the Ethics Body represents progress in preventing another Qatargate, it may not fully address the current challenges because it is the entire culture and accountability that must change and evolve today."

[click here](#)

Martens Centre: From Boom to Bust: How can Germany Restart its Economic Engine? – 15 May 2024

"The aim of the conference organized by the Martens Center was to shed light on the complexities of the German economic landscape amidst challenges and transitions. The event addressed the 2023 contraction attributed to persistent inflation, high energy prices, and weakened foreign demand, which led to declines in industrial activity, household income, and government expenditure, resulting in a 0.3% shrinkage of GDP. Discussions also highlighted the unwinding of a decade-long property boom, the costs associated with addressing transitions such as the green transition and demographic aging, and Germany's strategic positioning in the face of the geopolitical landscape. Presented as the "sick man of Europe" in the early 2000s, Germany had, in recent years, achieved significant growth, establishing itself as a major economic player. Today, however, what are the challenges facing the country?"

[click here](#)

C4EPOSITION

Júlia Tar, Technology Reporter, Euractiv

EU braces for elections amid AI, cybersecurity, misinformation risks

As the EU gears up for its elections in June, the convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), misinformation, and cyber threats poses significant challenges to electoral integrity.

AI and deepfakes

Political examples of [deepfakes](#), synthesised visual content used for entertainment or spreading misinformation, include a hoax video of Governor Ron DeSantis resulting in him [withdrawing](#) from the presidential race, a deepfake pornographic video leading to the [withdrawal](#) of Turkish presidential candidate Muharrem Ince, robocalls featuring a deepfake of President Joe Biden urging citizens not to vote in the New Hampshire Primary, or [deepfakes](#) of alleged members of the Le Pen family promoting French far-right parties.

A survey by the philanthropic organisation Luminare in 2023 [found](#) over half of German and French citizens worry about AI and deepfakes affecting election results.

In January, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, leaders [discussed](#) the impact of AI on democracy, with concerns raised about autocratic regimes silencing opposition and the potential misuse of power in regulating technology.

Misinformation and social media

The European Parliament [is using](#) TikTok despite both the European Commission and Parliament [banned](#) the application from corporate devices last year due to cybersecurity concerns. With this, the Parliament is aiming to combat misinformation during elections, and reaching young voters. Far-right politicians' [popularity is growing](#) on TikTok, also raising concerns about the influence of extremist movements on social media ahead of the EU elections.

In February, Meta and TikTok announced their own [preparations](#) for the EU elections, prior to [guidelines by the Commission](#) under the Digital Services Act (DSA) in March. While there are some measures taken about moderating political content on platforms, some raised questions about what counts as such.

Predicting elections via social media [has become more difficult](#) for researchers. Pre-2020, platforms were more open with their data due to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, but recent restrictions, like those from X, have left researchers blind to election risks.

Cyberattacks and data breaches

In May, a [statement](#) was released by the High Representative on behalf of the EU, Joseph Borrell, on continued malicious behaviour in cyberspace by the Russian Federation. The EU, alongside NATO, [condemned](#) the cyber activities conducted by [APT28](#), a Russian cyber espionage group also known as Fancy Bear. Borrell's warnings echo the EU's [second annual disinformation report](#), highlighting over 750 instances of attacks.

In February, an internal email [revealed](#) that Parliament's defence committee was the subject of phone hacking, following insiders' opinion that the EU institution's cybersecurity [is not ready](#) for the elections and the accompanying possible attacks.

In early May, the Parliament [notified](#) staff of a data breach in the PEOPLE app, used for non-permanent staff recruitment. While it is unknown whether this was the result of hacking, it does not help the Parliament's reputation in cybersecurity.

In conclusion, the array of examples presented underscores the ever more palpable influence of technology in shaping electoral landscapes.