

Elections shaping the future of Europe: Catastrophe avoided, challenge accepted

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CIDOB, Elisabets, 12, 08001 Barcelona

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The year 2017 has been decisive for the European project. After the UK becoming the first country that voluntarily decided to leave the European Union, in 2017 four key member states –the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom and Germany- will have held elections just after celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders, carrying a Europhobic and anti-Islam message, threatened to bring the “international populist alliance” to his country, after the victories of Trump and Brexit. In France, Marine Le Pen promised to reintroduce the national currency and a referendum on France's membership to the EU. The proposals of Le Pen and Wilders were both defeated in the polls and, with Macron's victory, a pro-European antidote has emerged.

In June, Theresa May held early elections to take advantage of the alleged Labour's weakness and obtain a large majority in the parliament legitimising her hard Brexit. It did not work and, since then, the Brexit mandate is less clear. Finally, in Germany, the re-election of Merkel will set the scene for the reform of the EU and the re-establishment of the Franco-German axis. The only uncertainty comes from the role that her probable allies in a potential *Jamaican* coalition will play.

This seminar will analyse the extent to which these elections have shaped the European agenda and their impact for the future of the EU. Contrary to the initial fears, the most catastrophic scenario on the disintegration of the EU has been avoided. The challenge of reforming the Union, however, lies ahead.

09.00 **Registration**

09.15 **Welcoming remarks**
Antoni Segura, President, CIDOB

09.30 **Elections in Europe: measuring the mood of the continent?**

The first panel will analyse the elections that have taken place in 2017 and the presence of European discussions in each of them, measuring the degree of discontent with the EU and the emergence of alternative pro-European discourses.

Adriaan Schout, Senior Research Fellow, Clingendael

Eckart Woertz, Senior Research Fellow, CIDOB

Dídac Gutiérrez-Peris, EU Research Director, Viavoice Paris; Associate Researcher, CIDOB

*Moderated by: **Pol Morillas**, Research Fellow in European Affairs, CIDOB*

11.15 **Coffee break**

11.45 **How have the UK elections affected Brexit and what impact for the future relations with the EU?**

The second session will elaborate on the effects of Brexit and the impact of the UK general election in the negotiations with the EU. It will also analyse the prospects for a win-win agreement that benefits both bilateral relations and the reform of the EU.

Tim Oliver, Dahrendorf Fellow, LSE Ideas

Susi Dennison, Director of European Power programme, ECFR

Nina Schick, independent analyst

*Moderated by: **Carme Colomina**, Journalist, ARA Newspaper; Associate Researcher, CIDOB*

13.30 **Lunch**

14.30 **The reform of the EU**

Once national landscapes have been reconfigured, it is time for the EU to think ahead. The last panel will analyse the shapes of EU reform, taking into account the debates started in Bratislava on the future of the EU and Juncker's White Paper.

Poi Morillas, Research Fellow, CIDOB

Stefan Lehne, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe

Agata Gostyńska-Jakubowska, Research Fellow, CER

*Moderated by: **Beatriz Navarro**, Brussels Correspondent, La Vanguardia*

16.15 **Concluding remarks**

Jordi Bacaria, Director, CIDOB

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