

Far right surge shakes France and Germany

[D theday.co.uk/far-right-surge-shakes-france-and-germany-4](https://theday.co.uk/far-right-surge-shakes-france-and-germany-4) 10 June 2024



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But the left also rises: Martin Lidegaard and Sigrid Friis of the Social Liberal party celebrate in Denmark.

Is history repeating itself? The far right were the big winners of this week's elections to the European Parliament. Some fear they will soon be in power all over Europe.

What's happening?

In **European Union** elections over the weekend, **far-right** parties won in France, Austria, Belgium and Italy and made gains in Germany.²

Now, people are asking: what does this mean for the future of Europe?

Find out more

Some say the far-right is not what it was 100 years ago, in the years before the **Nazis** rose to power. It is more **subtle**, and so more dangerous.

Back then, far-right parties attacked **democracy** as weak. Today its aim is not to destroy democratic systems but to use them for their own purposes.

So when they get into power, they gain control of the media and the legal system and use them to **harass** people who disagree with them out of public life.

That means that elections continue, but the far-right parties rig them in their favour.

However, that policy can **backfire**. The far right is good at campaigning but bad at being in charge, some say. People soon grow tired of them in power and chuck them out.

Others think the problem is not the far right getting into power. It is that non-far-right parties are taking on far-right ideas.

Across Europe centre-right governments are making stricter laws, especially cutting back on the right to protest.

So to focus just on the far-right parties, some say, is a mistake.

Is history repeating itself?

Some say

Yes! Right-wing movements are on the edge of taking power across Europe. They will probably win the next election in France, and maybe in other countries too.

Others think

No! The far-right today is very different to in the past. It is not trying to get rid of elections and democracy. We are not going to see a return to the politics of the 1930s.

1. According to the [University of Warwick](#).

2. According to a summary of the results from centre-left newspaper [The Guardian](#).

3. According to a report by Berlin-based campaign group [Liberties](#).

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

"The far right was on the march in the 1930s, and we defeated the fascists through a great united working-class effort. That sense of unity and strength is what gave people confidence to change things."

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Are you worried about the rise of the far right? What effect will it have on your life?

2. Wonder

Ken Loach (1936 –), British director

"Benito Mussolini created the word 'fascism.' He defined it as 'the merging of the state and the corporation.' He also said a more accurate word would be 'corporatism.' This was the definition in Webster's up until 1987 when a corporation bought Webster's and changed it to exclude any mention of corporations."

Adam McKay (1968 –), American screenwriter

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What do you think?

What questions do you have? - For example: Does history always repeat itself? What makes people turn to the far right?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Go back through the article above and pick out one hard fact and one opinion.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - If you had been able to vote in the European elections, whom would you have supported?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Organise a class debate on the question, "Is a far-right future inevitable?"

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - The year is 2034. Write a newspaper article describing what politics is like in your country today. Is the far right in power?

Glossary

European Union - A political and economic union of 27 countries.

Far-right - A range of ideologies that emphasise social order, racial purity and the elimination of opponents.

Nazis - A German political party of the twentieth century, led by Adolf Hitler. The Nazis controlled Germany from the early 1930s until the end of World War II.

Subtle - So delicate it is difficult to describe. Or doing something in a clever and indirect way.

Democracy - A system of government based on the idea of rule by the people.

Harass - Pester someone, or intimidate them with aggressive pressure.

Backfire - Not work out in the way intended.