



# OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

## Highlights

MP Open Call #11

Your Direct Line to Europe's Policymakers

5 October 2021

The OED is committed to strengthening dialogue between policymakers across Europe by providing a neutral, informal, and accessible space for conversation. Our monthly online MP Open Calls grew out of this mission and are a space for parliamentarians to set the agenda, discuss pressing national and European issues, and support each other by sharing best practices and concerns.

Our October call was joined by five members of parliament from Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia, and Spain. [Jana Puglierin](#), Senior Policy Fellow and Head of the ECFR's Berlin Office, joined the call and discussed the recent German elections with the participants.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CONVERSATION

- **The 2021 German federal election marked the beginning of a delicate phase for the future of Germany and European politics at large.** For the first time, not two but three people were competing for the chancellorship.
  - “The high turnout despite the pandemic is a sign that German democracy is still very much alive and kicking.”
  - “The turnout was slightly higher than in 2017: the SPD in particular has succeeded in mobilizing non-voters.”
- **The results of the election show that political fringes lost vis-à-vis more centrist positions**, both on the left and right side of the political spectrum. Despite regional differences, parties like *Die Linke* and *AfD* both saw a decrease in votes.
  - “We witnessed the so-called ‘Netherlandization of German politics’, where the three main winners, the Greens, the SPD and the FDP, reached between a 15% and 25% of votes.”
- **The election revolved around the question of continuity vs change.**

Results showed a generational gap in how the votes were cast, with younger voters demanding new ideas to tackle future issues, such as climate change, civil rights, education, and social justice.

- “The coming government will be faced with the task of getting major initiatives off the ground in four years that will have a massive impact on living conditions in 20 to 30 years and beyond.”
- **Policymakers around Europe now wait to see what the different coalition options might mean for the future of Europe and the direction of the German leadership in dealing with EU internal and foreign policy.**
  - “The SPD, Greens and FDP come out of the elections as the winners but take a very different view of the results – depending on their expectations and the pressure they feel upon them to act.”
  - “How will a post-Merkel Germany behave in international fora? The EU cannot afford to have Germany not having an opinion on the main European policy issues. Some of these are the relationship with other member states like Poland and Hungary, foreign policy, and European sovereignty, as well as the climate crisis. The problem is that not all parties that want to be part of the governing coalition agree on the best course of action on these themes.”
- **Continuity and change are key words also to German international strategic positioning.** The results of the consultations for the new government will have huge impact in fact on how the future German chancellor will tackle dialogue with China and Russia, face human rights and Rule of Law issues – both within and without the EU – and manage transatlantic relations.
  - “As far as transatlantic relations, continuity and dialogue seems to be expected. However, the debate on the lessons to be learned from NATO’s war in Afghanistan (with a UN mandate) with German participation was not tackled in the last weeks of the political campaign.”
- **As Angela Merkel prepares to leave, speculation arises on future interactions with other long-term European partners.** The reform of the EU Stability and Growth Pact, debates on defense funding, military missions, and the EU Peace Facility, next to ideas about EU sovereignty will all be critical issues on the table of the future chancellor whose leadership style and cabinet will be determinant for Europe’s future.
  - “Draghi’s Italy and Macron’s France might be interested in placing themselves as the most prominent European leaders in the global scheme (certainly they are among the most senior ones). The latter will especially be a counter voice to Germany, especially seen that Macron will be running a political campaign at the same time of the next EU Presidency under the French baton.”

## RESOURCES

- [German election 2021: full results and analysis](#) | The Guardian

In occasion of the German 2021 federal elections, the Guardian has compiled an analysis of the votes providing an interesting resource to understand how electoral trends and party

preferences regionally changed over time.

- [German elections 360°](#) | European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)

This is a rich coverage of the elections provided by the European Council on Foreign Relations. Expert perspectives are here available next to poll insights, geopolitical considerations and podcast resources.

- [Bundestag elections: what do they mean for Europe?](#) | Eurotopics

As the results of the election will eventually impact leadership all over Europe, here's an interesting review of perspectives from European countries about what this consultation means for the future.

- [Foreign and defence policy in the German election](#) | ECFR

When discussing possible government coalitions, foreign, security and defense policy exposes party differences and different future outlooks. Here Ulrike Franke, senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) reflects on the various perspectives and positionings between the parties on the matter.

- [Foreign Policy: the global challenges Germany's next chancellor faces](#) | DER SPIEGEL

Given a resurgence of geopolitical and leadership questions, the next German chancellor will have to take a stance in many issues in-between global politics and European relations, in primis relations with China and Russia. What does this mean for the new government? Read here for an insight into the conversation.

- Opinion: [The debate on the future of Europe has a German problem](#) | European Policy Center (EPC)

The Conference on the Future of Europe was set to strengthen European cohesion and integration. According to some, for Germany, the Conference could be an early opportunity for the new Chancellor to show a renewed commitment to the European project. This also in close partnership with Macron's France.

- Opinion: [Beyond Merkelism: what Europeans expect of post-election Germany](#) | ECFR

After a long period of stability, Berlin will face the challenge of setting the tone for a post-Merkel leadership. Here a thorough overview of expectancies, reflections, and perspectives of how future politics in Germany will dialogue with Merkel's legacy to reassess itself strategically in Europe.

## KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

The Open European Dialogue is a network driven by MPs. We look forward to hearing from you and helping you as best we can to connect and work with your colleagues from across Europe in these challenging times.

Keep in contact with your colleagues! Please know that you can always find the contact details of all OED members on the [members-only area of the website](#). Should you have issues logging in, you can contact [rfarulli@gmfus.org](mailto:rfarulli@gmfus.org).

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