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Europe: Fact Sheet on Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

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Introduction

This report provides a map of parliamentary and presidential elections that have been held at the national level in Europe in 2023, and a table of recent and upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections at the national level in Europe. It includes dates for direct parliamentary elections only, and excludes indirect elections.¹

Europe is defined in this product as the 50 countries under the portfolio of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. The report does not include the Holy See (Vatican City), as there are not any direct presidential or parliamentary elections held there. Electoral rules and governance structures can vary widely across European countries.

Seventeen European countries have held direct presidential and/or parliamentary elections in 2023. Some dates were subject to change due to snap elections, parliamentary votes of no confidence, or other factors. In 2023, snap elections² were held in seven European countries—Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain.

Parliament, or the legislative body, may be unicameral, with one legislative chamber, or bicameral, with a lower and upper chamber. In bicameral systems, the lower chamber is usually directly elected by the people and is the more powerful of the two (for example, the House of Commons in the United Kingdom). The upper chamber is frequently appointed or indirectly elected, and has more limited powers (for example, the House of Lords in the United Kingdom). Both the lower and upper chambers are directly elected in six countries (Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland).

The presidential election process in European countries varies.³ In many European countries, presidents or heads of state are elected directly by the people in a popular vote; however, in 13 countries, presidents are indirectly elected by Members of Parliament.⁴ There are 12 monarchies in Europe, including the Holy See.⁵ In lieu of a president, monarchs typically serve as the head of

¹ A direct election is an election where a political party or elected representative is chosen directly through a vote of the citizens. An indirect election is one where the citizen’s vote for an intermediate body that is empowered to select the elected official(s).

² In a parliamentary system, a snap election is an election that is held prior to its regularly scheduled date.

³ In **parliamentary republics**, the president as head of state typically has a ceremonial and largely nonpolitical role. In these republics, executive power arises from the legislature and is vested in a prime minister as head of government. In some parliamentary republics, the prime minister is chosen as part of political party negotiations following parliamentary elections; in others, the prime minister may be chosen by the president and/or approved by the parliament. The role of prime minister is often fulfilled by the leader of the majority party or majority coalition of parliament. In **presidential republics**, presidents are elected directly by the people and serve as both the head of state and the head of government. Cyprus and Turkey (Türkiye) are the only countries in Europe with a full presidential system. See **Table 1**, footnotes p and q for more information on Turkey. **Semi-presidential republics**, such as France, are a hybrid of these systems, providing for both a directly elected president and a prime minister responsible to parliament.

⁴ The 13 countries are Albania, Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Malta, San Marino, and Switzerland.

⁵ Per the CIA World Factbook, Denmark, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom are considered constitutional monarchies. Belgium is referred to as a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. The Holy See is labeled an ecclesiastical elective monarchy (or “absolute monarchy”). Andorra is considered a “parliamentary democracy” that retains its heads of state in the form of a co-principality; “the two princes—the president of France and the Spanish bishop of Urgell—serve with joint authority as heads of state.” For more information see <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>.

state with limited or ceremonial powers.⁶ In these instances, presidential elections are denoted as N/A or nonapplicable in the table below.

CRS has gathered the information presented in this report from numerous sources, including the U.S. Department of State, Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) World Factbook, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Election Guide, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and other news sources.

Figure 1 includes a map and calendar of the European parliamentary and presidential elections held in 2023.

Table 1 provides the dates of the last and next parliamentary and presidential direct elections in Europe. The "last election/runoff" column displays the dates of the most recent direct parliamentary and/or presidential elections. In many instances, the "last election/runoff" column includes more than one date, as parliamentary and/or presidential elections may occur in two-rounds with the top two candidates from an initial election advancing to a runoff election if no candidate receives a majority (this is the system in France).

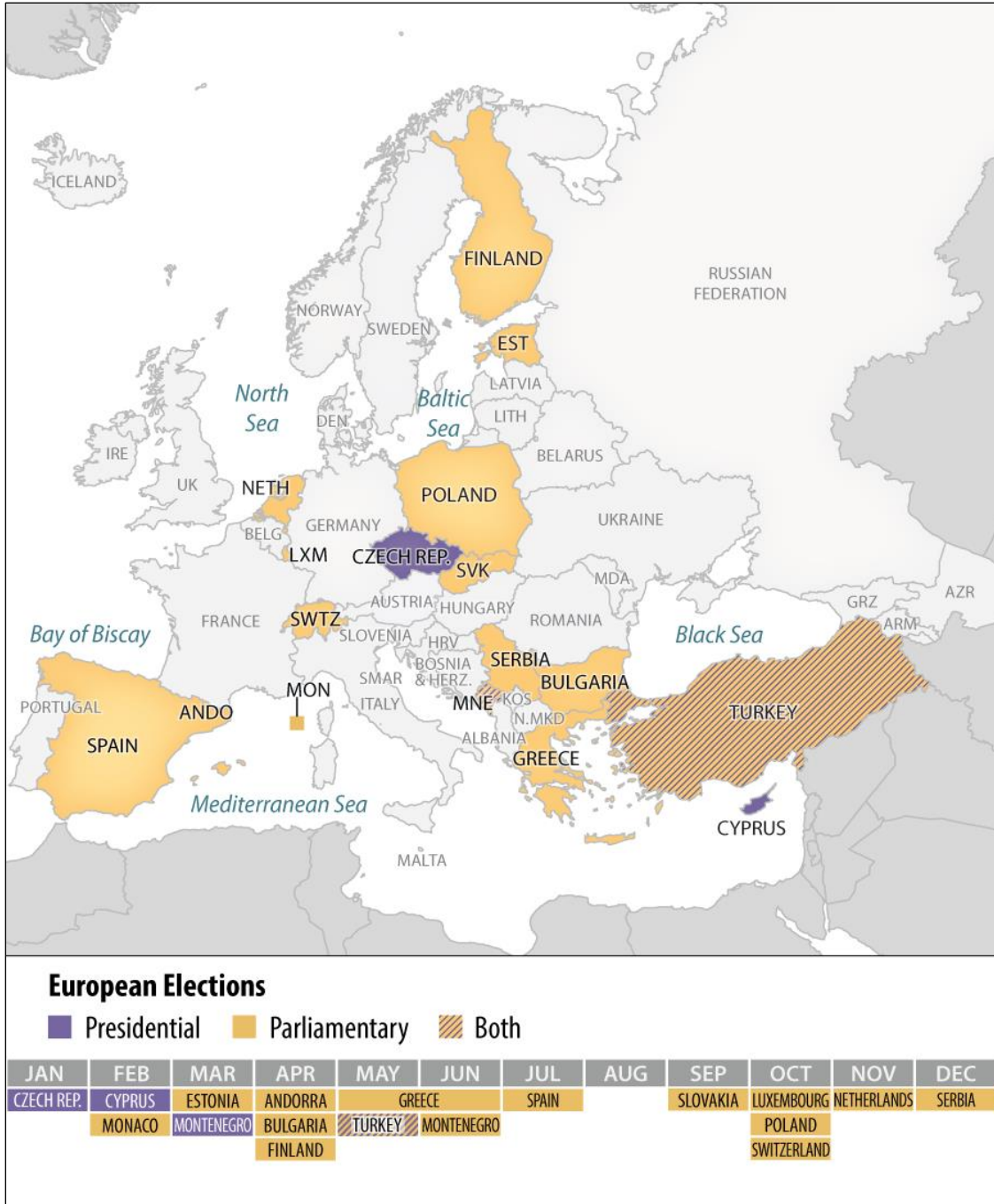
The "next election" column indicates the projected date when the next direct national election is expected to be held, based on law or practice. In most European countries, general elections occur at least once every four to six years. Unless laws or decisions in a particular country set a specific election day, dates are calculated based on the dates of the most recent election and length of the term. Elections that are expected to occur by a specific month/year are listed in the table according to that month/year.

European Elections in 2023

Seventeen European countries have held either presidential and/or parliamentary elections in 2023.

⁶ Some parliamentary systems, such as that of the United Kingdom, coexist with hereditary monarchies. In these systems, called parliamentary constitutional monarchies, monarchs typically serve as the head of state with limited or ceremonial powers. Prime ministers serve as the head of government, and may be appointed formally by the monarch, based on election results and often with the approval of parliament.

Figure I. European Elections in 2023



Source: Created by CRS, using data from the U.S. Department of State, Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA’s) World Factbook, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Election Guide, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and other news sources.

Notes: Table is current as of December 18, 2023. Table includes direct elections only. Europe is defined as the 50 countries (excluding the Holy See) under the portfolio of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

European Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

Table I. European Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

Country	Parliamentary Elections		Presidential Elections	
	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election
Albania	Apr. 25, 2021	Apr. 2026	Indirect	Indirect
Andorra	Apr. 2, 2023	Apr. 2027	N/A	N/A
Armenia	June 20, 2021	June 2026 ^a	Indirect	Indirect
Austria	Sept. 29, 2019	Sept. 2024	Oct. 9, 2022	Oct. 2028
Azerbaijan ^b	Feb. 9, 2020	Feb. 2025	Apr. 11, 2018	Apr. 2025
Belarus ^b	Nov. 17, 2019	Feb. 25, 2024	Aug. 9, 2020	Aug. 2025
Belgium	May 26, 2019	May 2024	N/A	N/A
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Oct. 2, 2022	Oct. 2026	Oct. 2, 2022	Oct. 2026
Bulgaria	Apr. 2, 2023 ^c	April 2027	Nov. 14, 2021/ Nov. 21, 2021	Nov. 2026
Croatia	July 5, 2020	July 2024	Dec. 22, 2019/ Jan. 5, 2020	Dec. 2024
Cyprus	May 30, 2021	May 2026	Feb. 5, 2023/ Feb. 12, 2023	Feb. 2028
Czech Republic	Chamber of Deputies: Oct. 8-9, 2021 Senate: Sept. 23, 2022 - Oct. 1, 2022	Chamber of Deputies: Oct. 2025 Senate: Sept. 2024	Jan. 13-14, 2023/ Jan. 27-28, 2023	Jan. 2028
Denmark	Nov. 1, 2022 ^d	Oct. 2026	N/A	N/A
Estonia	Mar. 5, 2023	Mar. 2027	Indirect	Indirect
Finland	Apr. 2, 2023	Apr. 2027	Jan. 28, 2018	Jan. 2024
France	June 12, 2022/ June 19, 2022	June 2027	Apr. 10, 2022/ Apr. 24, 2022	Apr. 2027
Georgia	Oct. 31, 2020/ Nov. 21, 2020	Oct. 2024	Oct. 28, 2018 ^e	Indirect
Germany	Sept. 26, 2021	Sept. 2025	Indirect	Indirect
Greece	June 25, 2023 ^f	June 2027	Indirect	Indirect
Hungary	Apr. 3, 2022	Apr. 2026	Indirect	Indirect
Iceland	Sept. 25, 2021	Sept. 2025	June 27, 2020	June 2024
Ireland	Feb. 8, 2020	Feb. 2025	Oct. 26, 2018	Oct. 2025
Italy	Chamber of Deputies & Senate: Sept. 25, 2022 ^g	Chamber of Deputies & Senate: Sept. 2027	Indirect	Indirect
Kosovo	Feb. 14, 2021	Feb. 2025	Indirect	Indirect

Country	Parliamentary Elections		Presidential Elections	
	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election
Latvia	Oct. 1, 2022	Oct. 2026	Indirect	Indirect
Liechtenstein	Feb. 7, 2021	Feb. 2025	N/A	N/A
Lithuania	Oct. 11, 2020/ Oct. 25, 2020	Oct. 2024	May 12, 2019/ May 26, 2019	May 2024
Luxembourg	Oct. 8, 2023	Oct. 2028	N/A	N/A
Malta	Mar. 26, 2022	Mar. 2027	Indirect	Indirect
Moldova	July 11, 2021	July 2025	Nov. 1, 2020/ Nov. 15, 2020	Nov. 2024
Monaco	Feb. 5, 2023	Feb. 2028	N/A	N/A
Montenegro	June 11, 2023 ^h	June 2027	March 19, 2023/ Apr. 2, 2023	Mar. 2028
Netherlands	Nov. 22, 2023 ⁱ	Nov. 2027	N/A	N/A
North Macedonia	July 15, 2020	July 2024	Apr. 21, 2019/ May, 5 2019	Apr. 2024
Norway	Sept. 13, 2021	Sept. 2025	N/A	N/A
Poland	Sejm & Senate: Oct. 15, 2023	Sejm & Senate: Oct. 2027	June 28, 2020/ July 12, 2020	June 2025
Portugal	Jan. 30, 2022 ^j	Mar. 10, 2024 ^k	Jan. 24, 2021	Jan. 2026
Romania	Chamber of Deputies & Senate: Dec. 6, 2020	Chamber of Deputies & Senate: Dec. 2024	Nov. 10, 2019/ Nov. 24, 2019	Nov. 2024
Russian Federation ^b	Sept. 19, 2021	Sept. 2026	Mar. 18, 2018	Mar. 2024
San Marino	Dec. 8, 2019	Dec. 2024	Indirect	Indirect
Serbia	Dec. 17, 2023 ^l	Dec. 2027	Apr. 3, 2022	Apr. 2027
Slovakia	Sept. 30, 2023 ^m	Sept. 2027	Mar. 16, 2019/ Mar. 30, 2019	Mar. 2024
Slovenia	Apr. 24, 2022	Apr. 2026	Oct. 23, 2022/ Nov. 13, 2022	Oct. 2027
Spain	Congress of Deputies & Senate: July 23, 2023 ⁿ	Congress of Deputies & Senate: July 2027	N/A	N/A
Sweden	Sept. 11, 2022	Sept. 13, 2026	N/A	N/A
Switzerland	National Council & Council of States: Oct. 22, 2023 ^o	National Council & Council of States: Oct. 2027	Indirect	Indirect
Turkey ^p (Türkiye) ^q	May 14, 2023	May 2028	May 14, 2023/ May 28, 2023	May 2028
Ukraine	July 21, 2019	July 2024	Mar. 31, 2019/ Apr. 21, 2019	Mar. 2024

Country	Parliamentary Elections		Presidential Elections	
	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election	Last Election/ Runoff	Next Election
United Kingdom	Dec. 12, 2019	Jan. 2025	N/A	N/A

Source: Created by CRS, using data from the U.S. Department of State, European Council, Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) World Factbook, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Election Guide, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and other news sources.

Notes: Table is current as of December 18, 2023. Europe is defined as the 50 countries (excluding the Holy See) under the portfolio of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. N/A means nonapplicable. The "last election/runoff" column may include more than one date, as parliamentary and/or presidential elections may often occur in two-rounds with the top two candidates from an initial election advancing to a runoff election if no candidate receives a majority. Unless a country sets a specific election day, dates in the "next election" column are calculated based on the dates of the most recent election and length of the term. Elections that are expected to occur by a specific month/year are listed in the table according to that month/year.

- a. Armenia originally had elections scheduled for December 2023, but held a snap election on June 20, 2021. The prime minister announced the snap election to address the political opposition that arose following a cease-fire agreement that he signed with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. See CRS Report R46651, *Azerbaijan and Armenia: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, by Cory Welt and Andrew S. Bowen.
- b. Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia are considered "authoritarian" governments according to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2023*. See *Freedom in the World 2023* country scores at <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>. For more information on Belarus and Russia, see CRS In Focus IF10814, *Belarus: An Overview*, by Cory Welt and Shelby B. Senger and CRS Report R46518, *Russia: Domestic Politics and Economy*, by Cory Welt and Rebecca M. Nelson.
- c. As Bulgarian parties failed to form a government after the October 2022 parliamentary election, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev set April 2, 2023, as the date for the country's fifth parliamentary election since April 2021.
- d. Denmark originally had a parliamentary election scheduled for June 2023, but held a snap parliamentary election on November 1, 2022. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced the snap election after a party in her coalition government threatened to withdraw support over her handling of a controversial decision to cull several million minks during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- e. Constitutional amendments in 2017 changed the presidential election to an indirect election. The 2018 presidential election in Georgia was the last in which the president was directly elected. Beginning in 2023, Members of Parliament and local government representatives would elect Georgia's president. See CRS Report R45307, *Georgia: Background and U.S. Policy*, by Cory Welt.
- f. In April 2023, Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and President Katerina Sakellariopoulou announced the dissolution of parliament and called a snap election for May 21, 2023. With no party able to form a coalition government, a second snap election was held on June 25, 2023.
- g. Italy held a snap parliamentary election on September 25, 2022, following Prime Minister Draghi's resignation and the dissolution of parliament on July 21, 2022.
- h. Three days before the presidential election, Montenegro's then-President Milo Djukanovic issued a decree dissolving parliament. A snap parliamentary election was held on June 11, 2023.
- i. Parliamentary elections in the Netherlands were to occur in 2025. However, in July 2023, the four-party coalition government collapsed and the caretaker government announced snap parliamentary elections for November 2023.
- j. In November 2021, the Portuguese president announced plans to dissolve parliament and called a snap election on January 30, 2022.
- k. Parliamentary elections in Portugal were to occur in 2026. However, on November 9, 2023, Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa announced a snap parliamentary election on March 10, 2024, following the resignation of its prime minister amid a corruption investigation.
- l. Parliamentary elections in Serbia were to occur in 2026. However, on November 1, 2023, President Aleksandar Vucic dissolved parliament and announced that early parliamentary elections and partial local elections would be held on December 17, 2023.

- m. In December 2022, Slovakia's coalition government lost a no-confidence vote in parliament. In late January 2023, Slovakia's parliament amended the country's constitution to enable early elections and approved September 30, 2023, as the date for the snap election.
- n. Parliamentary elections in Spain were to occur in December 2023. However, following local elections in late May 2023, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced he would dissolve parliament. He called for a snap election for July 23, 2023.
- o. Each canton in Switzerland organizes its elections for the Council of States. The first round of the election to the Swiss Council of States is held at the same time as elections to the National Council in all cantons, with one exception. The canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden holds its elections on the last Sunday in April. Depending on the results of the election, a second round or runoff election may be required in some cantons.
- p. On April 16, 2017, a constitutional referendum was held on amending the Turkish Constitution, including abolishing the office of the prime minister and replacing the country's existing parliamentary system with a presidential system. The referendum passed. On June 24, 2018, Turkey held a snap election, reelecting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. "With the elimination of the prime minister's post, President Erdoğan now controls all executive functions ... and the capacity of the parliament to provide a check on his rule is, in practice, seriously limited," according to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2021*. See Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, *Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy Under Siege*, Freedom House, 2021, at https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf. For more information, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.
- q. "In late 2021, President Erdogan directed the use of "Türkiye" (the country's name in Turkish) in place of "Turkey" or other equivalents (e.g., the German "Türkei," the French "Turquie") in Turkish government documents and communications. In June 2022, the United Nations accepted the Turkish request to change the country's name at the body to "Türkiye." In January 2023, the State Department spokesperson said that the department would use the revised spelling "in most formal diplomatic and bilateral contexts" where appropriate. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names retained both "Turkey" and "Republic of Turkey" as conventional names, and the spokesperson said that the State Department could use those names if it is in furtherance of broader public understanding. State Department Press Briefing, January 5, 2023." See CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

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