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POLICY BRIEF

A CRISIS OF ONE'S OWN: THE POLITICS OF TRAUMA IN EUROPE'S ELECTION YEAR

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SUMMARY

- European politics is not simply divided between left and right, and between pro- and anti-European integration attitudes – but between different 'crisis tribes' whose members have been traumatised by key events.

- In the last decade, Europe has undergone crises of the economy, security, health, climate, and migration, which have created political identities that run through and between countries.

- Germany is the only country whose citizens select 'immigration' as the issue that has affected them above all else. In France and Denmark, people choose climate change as the most important crisis. Italians and Portuguese point to global economic turmoil. In Spain, Great Britain, and Romania, the covid-19 pandemic is the principal issue. Estonians, Poles, and Danes consider the war in Ukraine to be the most transformative of crises.

- In the upcoming European Parliament election, covid-19, the economy, and Ukraine are unlikely to be key mobilising issues. The climate and migration crises are dominating headlines and will be especially influential in how people vote.

Crisis Europe

Ahead of this year's election to the European Parliament, political leaders are trying to work out which issues will define the next phase of European politics. The left-right divide is a less useful predictor of electoral behaviour than it once was – not least because, in numerous countries, parties from either side of the political spectrum are converging on many key questions, from migration to social spending. The <u>divide</u> between pro- and anti-European parties is also likely to be a poor guide, in contrast to the 2019 election, which took place while Brexit was still under negotiation: most far-right parties have given up on their pledges to leave the European Union, while no leader is talking about a federal Europe. And in an atmosphere of anxiety where 6 in every 10 citizens <u>feel</u> their respective countries are heading in the <u>wrong direction</u>, the most beloved split of political strategists – between hope and fear – has become so unbalanced in the direction of fear that it cannot help as much as it once did. So how should we think about the future of European politics?

To help answer this question, the European Council on Foreign Relations commissioned a survey in 11 European countries: EU states Germany, France, Poland, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Romania, Portugal, and Estonia; and two European countries outside the EU – Great Britain and Switzerland. It mapped party support against attitudes in different policy areas and attitudes towards the performance of the EU institutions and national governments. From it, we conclude that the prevailing political analysis lacks an understanding of the competing existential traumas that run through and between different member states. We believe these can shed light on the future of the continent's politics. (The survey was part of a global public opinion polling project that also included ten non-European countries, and which were the focus of our previous <u>report</u>.)

Over the past 15 years, Europe has experienced five major crises. The climate crisis forced Europeans to imagine a world in peril. The global financial crisis led Europeans to doubt their children would enjoy living standards better than their own. The migration crisis triggered an identity panic that centred on questions of multiculturalism and the meaning of nation-states. The covid-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of our health systems in a globalised world. And the war in Ukraine shattered the illusion that major war would never return to the European continent. These five crises have several things in common: they were felt across Europe, although to varying intensities; they were experienced as an existential threat by many Europeans; they dramatically affected government policies; and they are by no means over.

The term <u>"polycrisis"</u> has emerged to <u>suggest</u> all five crises are taking place more or less

concurrently, that the shock of their cumulative interaction is more overwhelming than their sum, and that these different crises share no single cause or one-size-fits-all solution. It is clear that the climate crisis has triggered migration; and that covid-19 and the war have changed governments' economic policies. But an underreported feature of the polycrisis is that for different societies and for different social groups one crisis usually plays a dominant role above others. French president Emmanuel Macron underlined this well when he contrasted those who worry about the end of the month (economic crisis) with those who worry about the end of the world (climate crisis). That is what we mean when we say that everyone wants a crisis of their own.

The survey tells the story of current European politics and the experiences deriving from these crises. It finds that in prominent areas of debate such as climate and migration, political parties that normally focus on one of these sorts of crisis are now branching out to try to address other sources of trauma. In Europe's big election year of 2024, this will have profound consequences for the fate of the continent.

Five crisis tribes

Which of the five crises has been the most critical in shaping Europeans' views of the future? And for which European citizens precisely?

The central conclusion of our research is that no single crisis dominates the collective European imagination. Climate change, the war in Ukraine, covid-19, immigration, and global economic turmoil – each of these five issues has its own sizeable 'constituency' of people who cite one particular crisis as the one that most preoccupies them. These constituencies are unevenly distributed between different generations and between different countries.

As the nine EU countries polled account for 75 per cent of the EU27's population and are located across the bloc's geographic regions, we have extrapolated the results to estimate how big the different constituencies could be in the upcoming European Parliament election. Within the EU27's voting age population of 372 million people, this would lead to around 74 million people who cite climate, 74 million covid-19, and 71 million the economic crisis as their main worry. These are followed by 58 million EU citizens who are primarily concerned with immigration, and 50 million who are focused on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Around 47 million people struggle to associate with any of the five crises. If these groups were to be represented in the European Parliament, this is how their representation would look.

Europe's 'crisis constituencies'.
In number of voters.
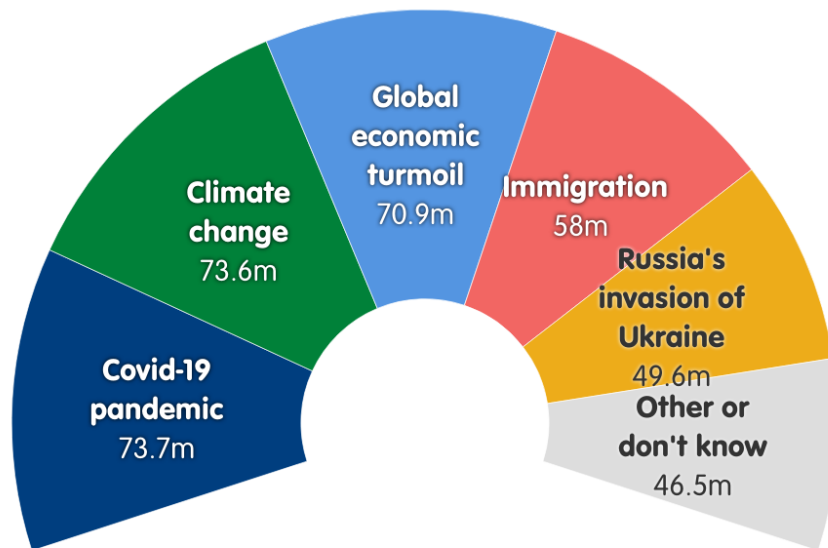
Based on responses to the question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed the way you look at your future?"
Population-weighted average across nine EU countries polled was used to calculate the share of different constituencies in the EU27's voting age population of 372 million.

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European constituency of different crises. In number of voters.

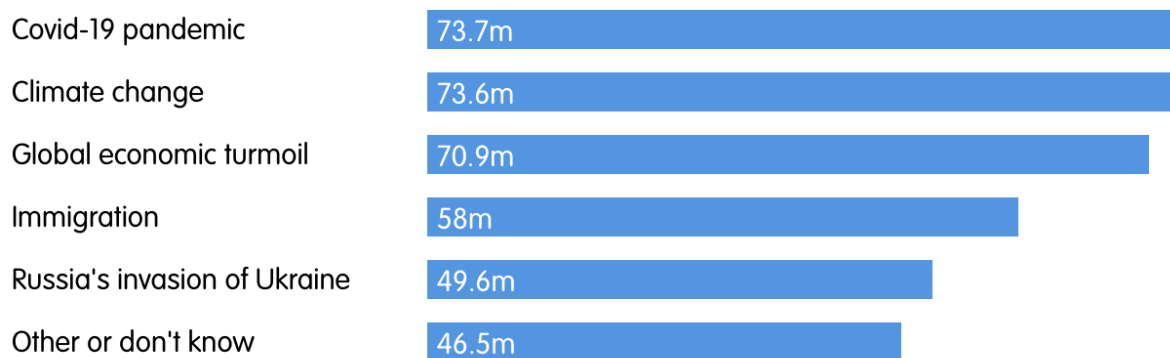|	
Covid-19 pandemic	73.7m
Climate change	73.6m
Global economic turmoil	70.9m
Immigration	58m
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	49.6m
Other or don't know	46.5m

Based on responses to the question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed the way you look at your future?"
Population-weighted average across nine EU countries polled was used to calculate the share of different constituencies in the EU27's voting age population of 372 million.

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We think of these five groups as the different 'crisis tribes' of Europe. Like all tribes, they share a common origin story. They share forms of language and sensibilities. They have totems and leaders, and they have internal fractures.

The geography of Europe's crisis tribes

The crisis tribes are not confined to a single nation, and they are unevenly distributed across Europe.

Germany is the only country where the largest number of people select immigration as the issue that most concerns them; recent migrant arrivals may have triggered memories of 2015, when the country took in 1 million people, including Syrians fleeing Bashar al-Assad. France and Denmark are the only EU countries whose citizens consider climate change to be the most important crisis. Citizens in Italy and Portugal point to the economic turmoil of the last decade and a half; the euro crisis will have left a long tail in those countries. And in Spain, Great Britain, and Romania, people view the covid-19 pandemic as the issue that has affected them most. Estonians, Poles, and Danes consider the war in Ukraine to be the most transformative of crises.

Different 'crisis constituencies' – by country. In per cent.

	Average	CH	DE	DK	EE	ES	FR	GB	IT
Climate change	19	22	20	29	6	19	27	22	21
Immigration	12	19	31	13	6	10	16	14	10
Covid-19 pandemic	19	18	14	8	8	34	17	26	20
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	17	12	16	29	40	6	7	6	7
Global economic turmoil	21	15	9	13	29	19	16	18	34
Other	5	6	4	3	5	5	6	6	3
Don't know	8	8	7	6	6	7	11	9	5

Based on responses to the question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed the way you look at your future?"
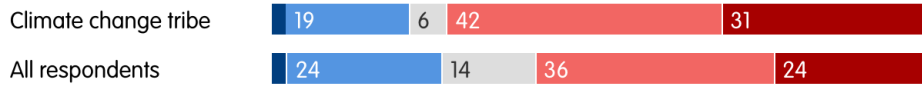
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Europeans also differ in their evaluation of their governments' performance when it comes to dealing with crises. For example, members of the migration tribe believe that their governments have done a very poor job on immigration, while the Ukraine tribe is more optimistic about how their national leaders are handling the war.
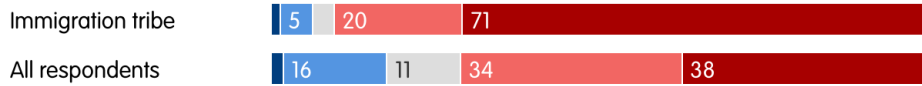
Has the EU (or UK/Swiss govt.) done a good or bad job handling ... By selected crisis, average across 11 countries polled, in per cent.

■ Very good job ■ Fairly good job ☐ Don't know ■ Fairly bad job ■ Very bad job
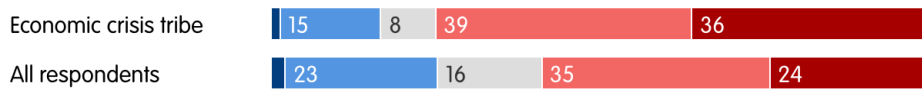
Climate change

| Climate change tribe | 19 | 6 | 42 | 31 |
| All respondents | 24 | 14 | 36 | 24 |

Immigration

| Immigration tribe | 5 | 20 | 71 |
| All respondents | 16 | 11 | 34 | 38 |

Covid-19 pandemic

| Covid-19 tribe | 8 | 40 | 6 | 22 | 25 |
| All respondents | 9 | 41 | 8 | 21 | 21 |

Russia's invasion of Ukraine

| War tribe | 8 | 44 | 7 | 26 | 16 |
| All respondents | 5 | 33 | 14 | 25 | 22 |

Global economic turmoil

| Economic crisis tribe | 15 | 8 | 39 | 36 |
| All respondents | 23 | 16 | 35 | 24 |

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If the war tribe needed a capital, it would probably be Tallinn – as the capital of the country with the largest percentage of people in that tribe, although Poland and Denmark also see the war at the top of their crisis lists (in Denmark it is tied with climate).

The five 'crisis tribes' of Europe

	Capital	Leading age group	Leading education group	Number of EU voters ▼
Covid-19	🇪🇸 Madrid	● 40s	Medium	73.7m
Climate	🇩🇰 Copenhagen	● 60s	Higher	73.6m
Economic crisis	🇮🇹 Rome and 🇵🇹 Lisbon	● 30s	Medium	70.9m
Immigration	🇩🇪 Berlin	● 50s	Medium	58m
War	🇪🇪 Tallinn	● 60s	Medium	49.6m

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And while some crises loom large in national imaginations, others barely feature. For example, Estonians' worries about the war in Ukraine and the economy dominate above all else. Immigration is the main cause for concern for only a handful of Poles, Estonians, Romanians, and Portuguese, even while refugees from Ukraine continue to arrive. Germans appear unfazed by economic woes. And an almost shockingly low number of people in France, Great Britain, Italy, and Spain name the war Ukraine as the crisis that has most impacted the way they look at their future.

Denmark: Do you think the European Union has generally done a good or bad job when it comes to its handling of each of the following issues? In per cent.
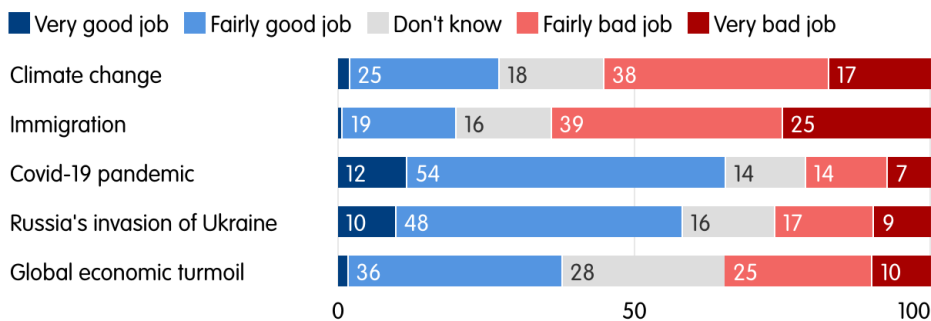
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The demography of the crisis tribes

The crises also divide Europeans along age, gender, and education lines.

Unsurprisingly, young people pick the climate crisis over other crises, with 24 per cent of 18-29-year-olds particularly concerned. In Great Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland, young people tend to prioritise climate issues above all else. However, in other countries, young people are more focused on problems such as global economic turmoil (in Estonia and Portugal), the war in Ukraine (in Poland), and covid-19 (in Spain and Romania). In contrast, looking jointly at all countries, the over-70s are most mobilised by the war in Ukraine (27 per cent), and they are more focused on immigration than the younger generations. Covid-19 is the only crisis which, across Europe, does not appear to preoccupy one generation more than any other.

Whereas the young are worried about the future, we can expect older generations' concern with Ukraine to have been shaped more by their experience of the cold war. The similar responses regarding the pandemic may derive from the way in which it affected everyone.

In some places, women more often than men select covid-19 as the crisis that most affected them. This is evident in Great Britain, France, Spain, Switzerland, and Romania. Meanwhile, men tend to be more focused on immigration than women in Spain, France, Great Britain, and Switzerland.

Different 'crisis constituencies' – by gender. Average across 11 European countries polled, in per cent.

Show by country: Denmark / Estonia / France / Germany / Great Britain / Italy / Poland / Portugal / Romania / Spain / Switzerland / All

	Male	Female
Climate change	20	18
Immigration	14	11
Covid-19 pandemic	17	21
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	18	16
Global economic turmoil	20	22
Other	5	5
Don't know	7	8

Based on responses to the question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed the way you look at your future?"

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Different 'crisis constituencies' – by age. Average across 11 European countries polled, in per cent.

Show by country: Denmark / Estonia / France / Germany / Great Britain / Italy / Poland / Portugal / Romania / Spain / Switzerland / **All**

	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Climate change	24	18	15	18	19	17
Immigration	9	11	11	13	13	16
Covid-19 pandemic	19	20	22	19	20	15
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	12	14	15	17	19	27
Global economic turmoil	22	23	23	20	19	16
Other	4	5	5	6	4	4
Don't know	10	9	9	7	5	6

Based on responses to the question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed the way you look at your future?"

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In terms of education, highly educated individuals across all 11 European countries point to climate change as their most transformative crisis, slightly ahead of economic troubles. Conversely, individuals with fewer formal educational qualifications are more likely to feel affected by immigration. This pattern is observable in Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Poland.

Different 'crisis constituencies' – by education. Average across 11
European countries polled, in per cent.

Show by country: Denmark / Estonia / France / Germany / Great Britain / Italy / Poland / Portugal /
Romania / Spain / Switzerland / All

	Low	Medium	High
Climate change	16	18	22
Immigration	15	12	11
Covid-19 pandemic	20	19	19
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	15	18	18
Global economic turmoil	20	21	21
Other	4	5	5
Don't know	10	8	5

Based on responses to the question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed
the way you look at your future?"

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Political parties and the crisis tribes

Europe's crises put people through experiences whose impacts do not map neatly onto left or
right, pro- or anti-immigration, establishment or populist divisions. Instead, running through
all these experiences is a strong sense of disappointment resulting from government
inadequacies in crisis management – and a fear that the crises might return.

The two crises that are dominating the media and political debate in the run-up to the
elections are climate and migration. And the struggle between the two tribes that most closely
follow these issues is shaping up into a clash of two 'extinction rebellions'. While climate
activists fear the obliteration of human and other life, anti-migration activists fear the
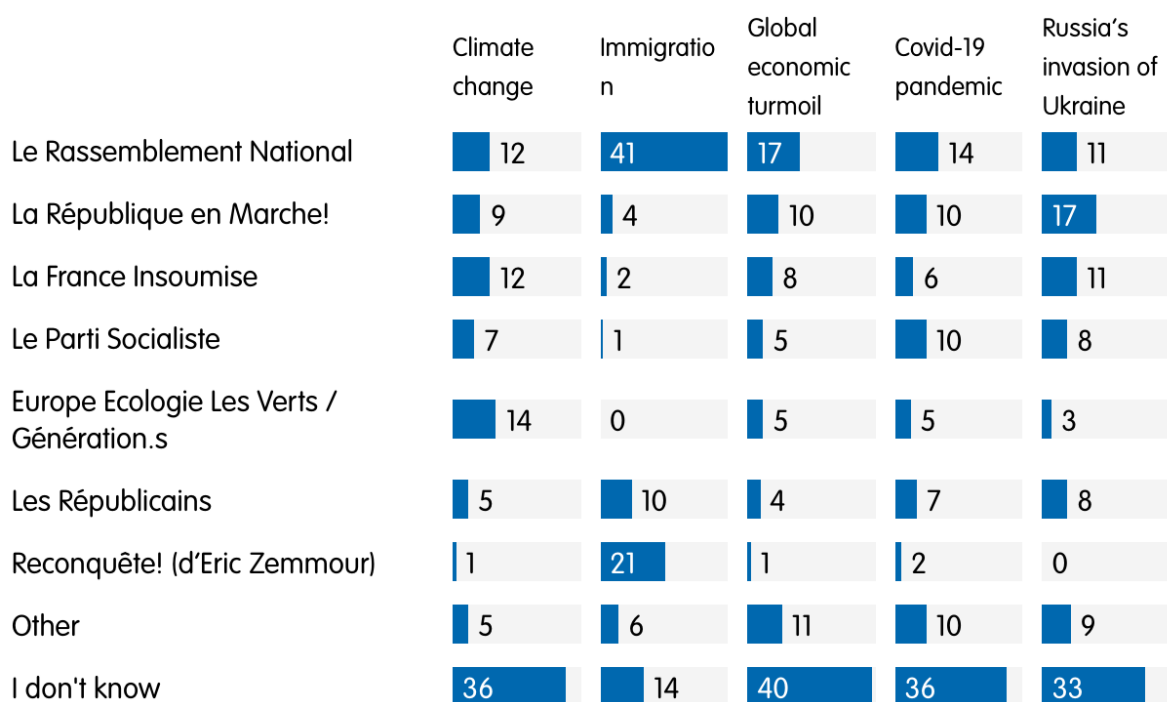disappearance of their nations and their cultural identity.

Those who view migration as the biggest crisis will very likely vote for centre-right or far-right
parties. Our data show that in Germany this means a high chance of voting for the AfD; in
France, for Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National or Eric Zemmour's Reconquête!

The inverse is true for climate, where those who consider this the most important issue

overwhelmingly flock to Green parties or parties such as the Socialists in Spain or Civic Coalition and the Left in Poland.

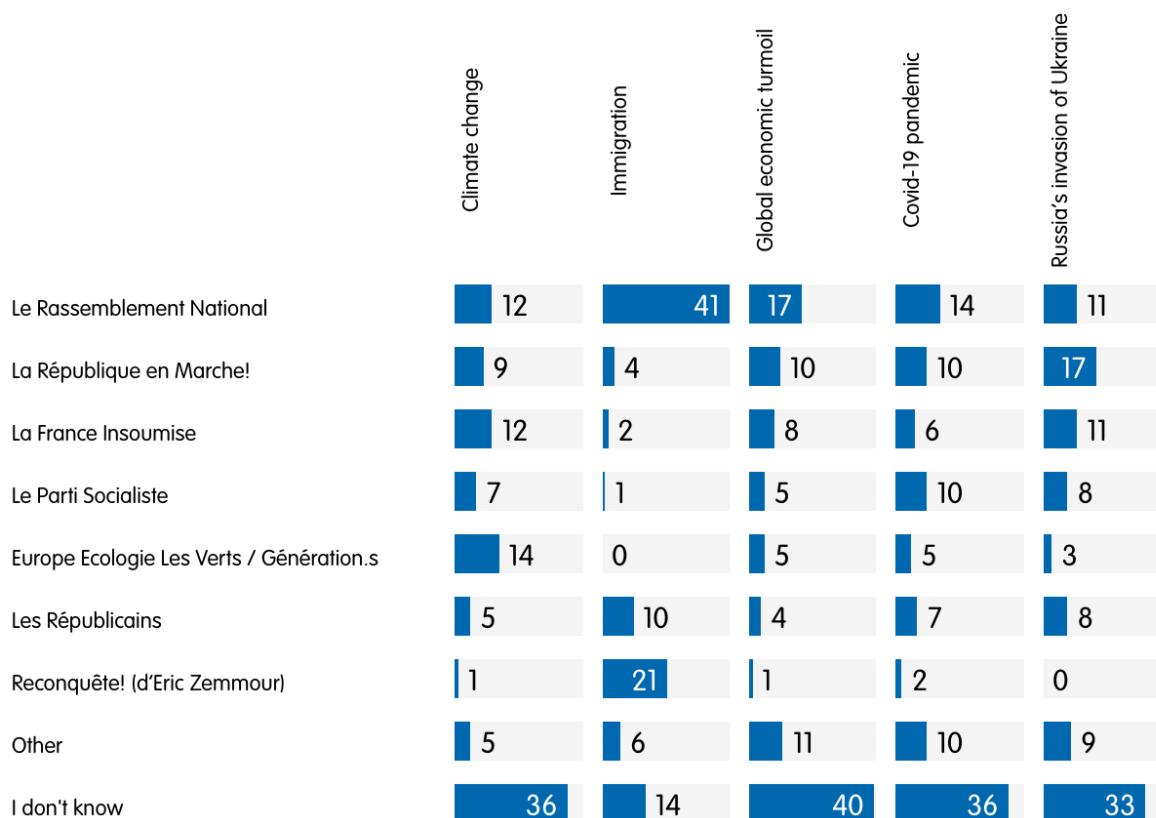## France: **Which political party best defends your ideas?** By selected crisis, in per cent.

France | Germany | Italy | Poland | Spain

	Climate change	Immigration	Global economic turmoil	Covid-19 pandemic	Russia's invasion of Ukraine
Le Rassemblement National	12	41	17	14	11
La République en Marche!	9	4	10	10	17
La France Insoumise	12	2	8	6	11
Le Parti Socialiste	7	1	5	10	8
Europe Ecologie Les Verts / Génération.s	14	0	5	5	3
Les Républicains	5	10	4	7	8
Reconquête! (d'Eric Zemmour)	1	21	1	2	0
Other	5	6	11	10	9
I don't know	36	14	40	36	33

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France: **Which political party best defends your ideas?** By selected crisis, in per cent.

France Germany Italy Poland Spain

	Climate change	Immigration	Global economic turmoil	Covid-19 pandemic	Russia's invasion of Ukraine
Le Rassemblement National	12	41	17	14	11
La République en Marche!	9	4	10	10	17
La France Insoumise	12	2	8	6	11
Le Parti Socialiste	7	1	5	10	8
Europe Ecologie Les Verts / Génération.s	14	0	5	5	3
Les Républicains	5	10	4	7	8
Reconquête! (d'Eric Zemmour)	1	21	1	2	0
Other	5	6	11	10	9
I don't know	36	14	40	36	33

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One might suppose that a common characteristic of both the climate and immigration tribes is that they are particularly sensitive to the temporal dimension of politics. They believe that if specific actions are not taken today, they will become impossible to implement tomorrow. They share the sentiment that we live on borrowed time.

Interestingly, however, our polling suggests that these two crisis tribes experience very different dynamics once their preferred parties are in power. When the migration tribe sees right-wing parties in power, its adherents tend to become more relaxed about the issue. In Italy, immigration is surprisingly low among the concerns of many voters: just 10 per cent of the country's population, and only 17 per cent of Brothers of Italy supporters, describe it as their most transformative crisis, regardless of the fact that the Brothers of Italy was elected on a strong anti-immigration platform. A similar picture was evident in Poland under Law and Justice before that party lost the recent general election. This is reminiscent of shifts in public

opinion in Great Britain, where voters' attitudes towards immigration improved after the Brexit referendum, even while the numbers of people arriving grew.

The climate tribe behaves in the inverse way. Our polling in Germany shows that people continue to worry about the climate crisis even when their government has a strong climate programme; they do not consider the problem resolved. In short, voters may perceive electing a far-right government as the answer to immigration fears – even if little changes in reality – but they do not consider the climate emergency over after electing the Greens.

For the other crises, the dynamics are quite different. Those in the economy tribe are not united by a left or right politics, but by an anti-government stance. They often dislike whichever government is in power, no matter its political orientation. For example, in Italy, 31 per cent in this group say they do not plan to vote in the upcoming European election, and a further 16 per cent are unsure how they will vote. In France, 40 per cent of this group do not know which party best reflects their ideas.
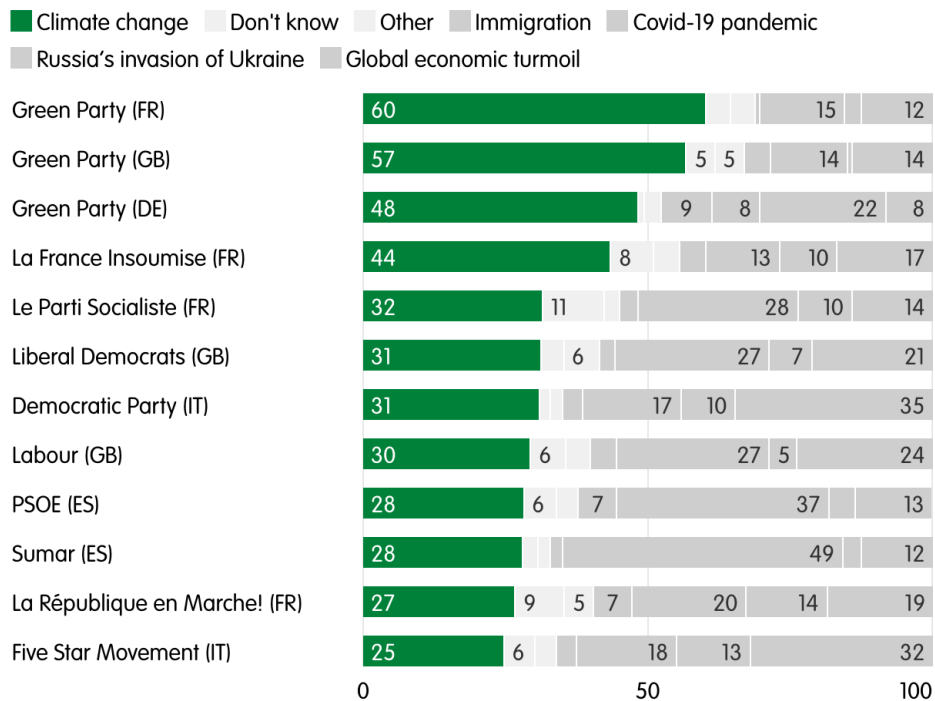
This could potentially be explained by the absence of any major difference between the austerity policies adopted by right-wing or left-wing governments in 2009-10. Rather than reinforcing the left-right divide, the economic crisis may have reduced its salience. Over the course of the different crises, countries that had incumbent centre-left governments replaced them with centre-right parties, and vice-versa. So, the members of the economic crisis tribe are in a sense mostly classical protest voters.

The members of the war tribe and the pandemic tribe are much more incumbent-friendly. As our previous report demonstrated, the pandemic has weakened rather than strengthened populist parties in Europe, at least in the short term. But in the long term, things could work out differently if one goes by the recent elections in several EU member states, such as in the Netherlands, Slovakia, and some German regions. These revealed the existence of anti-lockdown, anti-vax, and anti-war constituencies born in the time of covid-19 and since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They appear to be strong political identities.

Examining the distribution of tribes between parties shows that some tribes have a very concentrated political base. This means, for example, that the far-right could use its credibility on migration to branch out to other voters through a focus on climate, the cost of living, and wider issues. The same is true for climate, where young people are highly engaged and likely to provide a solid electoral base if political parties can frame the European election as a referendum on the topic. Many of the other mainstream parties are 'catch-all crisis' parties, which focus on more than one of the crises or different combinations of them. Lacking a single crisis constituency, they may face difficulty enthusing their supporters to
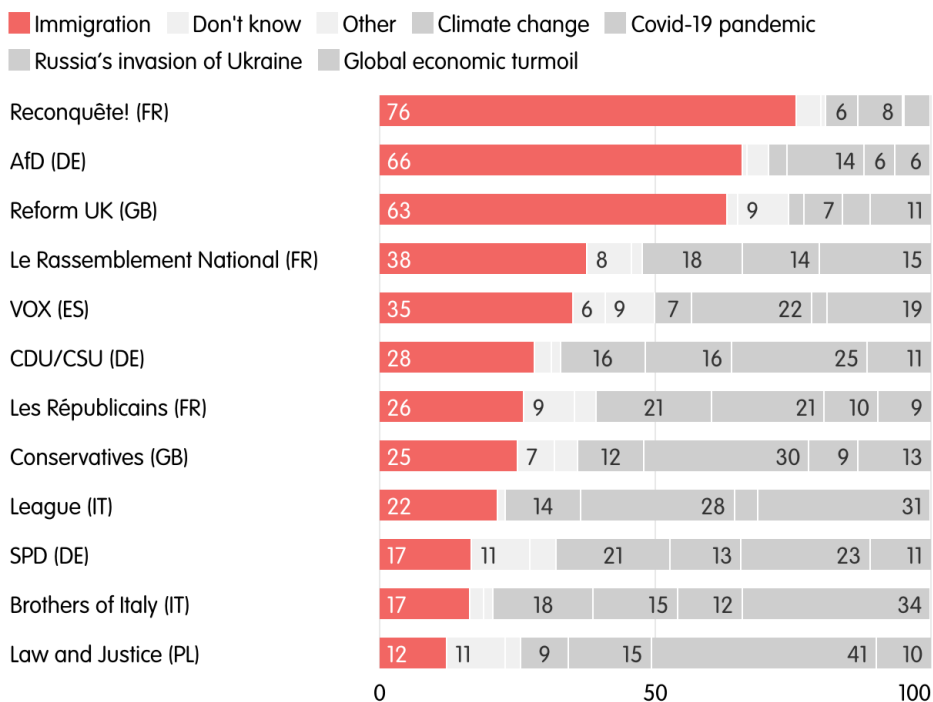
vote in the European election, which traditionally has a low turnout.

Top 12 parties by share of supporters who consider climate change to be an issue that has, over the past decade, most changed the way they look at their future. For 11 European countries polled, in per cent.

■ Climate change ■ Don't know ■ Other ■ Immigration ■ Covid-19 pandemic
■ Russia's invasion of Ukraine ■ Global economic turmoil

Party	Climate change	Don't know	Other	Immigration	Covid-19	Russia	Global econ
Green Party (FR)	60					15	12
Green Party (GB)	57	5	5			14	14
Green Party (DE)	48		9	8		22	8
La France Insoumise (FR)	44	8		13	10		17
Le Parti Socialiste (FR)	32	11			28	10	14
Liberal Democrats (GB)	31	6		27	7		21
Democratic Party (IT)	31			17	10		35
Labour (GB)	30	6		27	5		24
PSOE (ES)	28	6	7		37		13
Sumar (ES)	28				49		12
La République en Marche! (FR)	27	9	5	7	20	14	19
Five Star Movement (IT)	25	6		18	13		32

0   50   100

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Top 12 parties by share of supporters who consider immigration to be an issue that has, over the past decade, most changed the way they look at their future. For 11 European countries polled, in per cent.

Legend: ■ Immigration ■ Don't know ■ Other ■ Climate change ■ Covid-19 pandemic
■ Russia's invasion of Ukraine ■ Global economic turmoil

Party	Immigration	Don't know	Other	Climate change	Covid-19 pandemic	Russia's invasion of Ukraine	Global economic turmoil
Reconquête! (FR)	76			6	8		
AfD (DE)	66			14	6	6	
Reform UK (GB)	63		9	7		11	
Le Rassemblement National (FR)	38	8	18	14		15	
VOX (ES)	35	6	9	7	22		19
CDU/CSU (DE)	28		16	16	25		11
Les Républicains (FR)	26	9	21	21	10	9	
Conservatives (GB)	25	7	12	30	9	13	
League (IT)	22		14	28		31	
SPD (DE)	17	11	21	13	23	11	
Brothers of Italy (IT)	17		18	15	12	34	
Law and Justice (PL)	12	11	9	15	41	10	

0   50   100

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The crisis tribes and the European project

Jean Monnet said: "Europe will be forged in crisis and will be the sum of the solutions adopted to these crises". But what happens when people start to believe that neither their own country or the EU will be able to solve crises?

This is the backdrop to the forthcoming European Parliament election – where many citizens may be more motivated by anxiety of past crises returning than a hope for a better future. At the last election, the central struggle was between populists who wanted to turn their backs on European integration and mainstream parties that wanted to save the European project from Brexit and Donald Trump. But the next election will be about projections rather than projects. It will be a competition between rival fears of rising temperatures, immigration, inflation, and military conflicts.

All five crises are important going into the election, but they all have different mobilising potentials. The economic crisis often ends up demoralising people rather than motivating them to get to the polls. Our analysis suggests that establishment parties campaigning on the
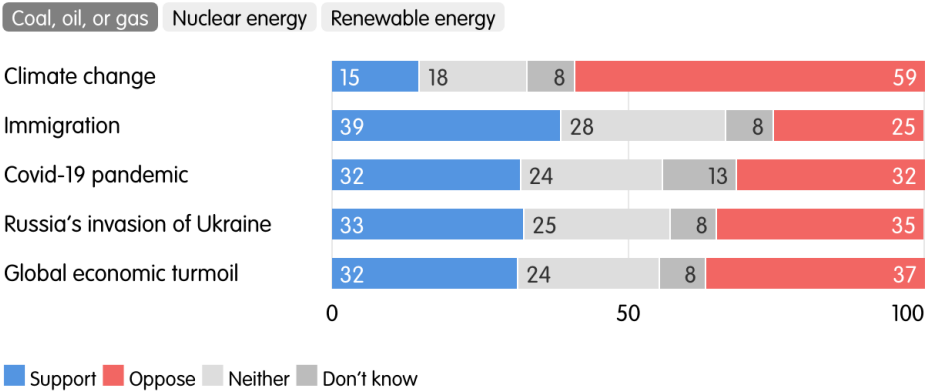
economy could struggle to do well.

In the months immediately following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the war consumed the continent's attention like no other issue. But it is not necessarily the case that citizens perceive this to be an existential crisis facing Europe as a whole; many may look on the war as an existential crisis only for Ukraine and some of its immediate neighbours. Indeed, most members of the war tribe think that NATO and the EU are not engaged in a war with Russia. A gulf may have begun to emerge between European elites, who still talk about doing whatever it takes to support Kyiv, and their constituents, who are more focused on other crises. The Israel-Hamas war, which began after our fieldwork was conducted, is likely to have a stronger impact on European politics in some countries than the Russia-Ukraine war, but it would be no surprise if its fallout mostly benefits the immigration tribe, disrupting national politics.

It is climate and migration which appear likely to shape this year's election, as suggested by the recent general election result in the Netherlands, which put an anti-immigrant party at the top of the poll and the pro-climate left-wing alliance led by Frans Timmermans in second place. The climate tribe is the most pro-EU tribe. The nature of this crisis demands broad international cooperation, so this tribe might well regard the EU as more able to deliver climate action than the national states.

Unlike the climate tribe, members of the migration tribe tend to be more EU-sceptic. They are the only group in which there is a majority that expects the bloc to fall apart in the next 20 years. Its members are most likely to vote for right-wing or far-right parties. They are the least supportive of renewable energy (although a majority still favours it), and they are the biggest fans of nuclear energy and fossil fuels. Many of them say they would prefer a leader who stands up for their country's independence rather than one who engages in international cooperation.
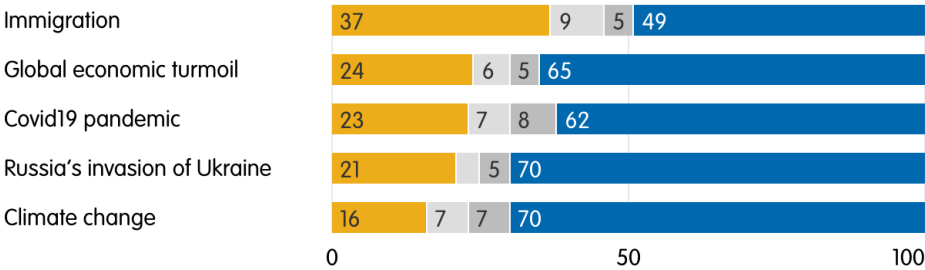
Do you support or oppose your country's government increasing spending on coal, oil, or gas extraction and production? By selected crisis, jointly for 11 European countries polled, in per cent.
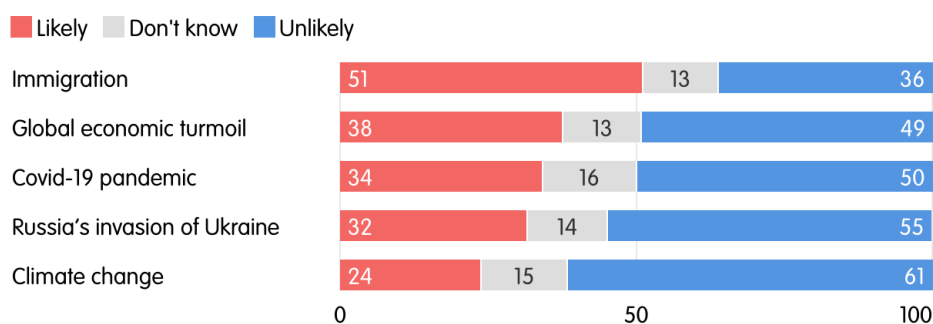
Coal, oil, or gas | Nuclear energy | Renewable energy

	Support	Neither	Don't know	Oppose
Climate change	15	18	8	59
Immigration	39	28	8	25
Covid-19 pandemic	32	24	13	32
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	33	25	8	35
Global economic turmoil	32	24	8	37

0 — 50 — 100

■ Support ■ Oppose ■ Neither ■ Don't know

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Thinking about how political leaders work with other countries, which of the following comes closest to your view? By selected crisis, jointly for 11 European countries polled, in per cent.

■ A good leader is one who always stands up for my country's independence ■ Neither
■ Don't know ■ A good leader is one who seeks the best for my country through international cooperation

	Independence	Neither	Don't know	International cooperation
Immigration	37	9	5	49
Global economic turmoil	24	6	5	65
Covid19 pandemic	23	7	8	62
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	21		5	70
Climate change	16	7	7	70

0 — 50 — 100

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How likely is it that, in the next 20 years, the European Union will fall apart? By selected crisis, jointly for 11 European countries polled, in per cent.

Legend: ■ Likely ■ Don't know ■ Unlikely

Crisis	Likely	Don't know	Unlikely
Immigration	51	13	36
Global economic turmoil	38	13	49
Covid-19 pandemic	34	16	50
Russia's invasion of Ukraine	32	14	55
Climate change	24	15	61

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The projection election

In the run-up to the 2019 European Parliament election, many feared that populist, anti-European parties would capitalise on voters' fear of migration to win a blocking minority in the EU's legislature. The former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon hoped that it could be the third triumph of an illiberal international after Brexit and the election of Trump. But in the event, these populist parties fell short and there was a surprising mobilisation of pro-European voters who wanted to save the EU from disintegration.

Mainstream parties might have realised they will struggle to make the next election a referendum on the future of the European project. As a result they are increasingly examining the two most mobilising crises – migration and climate – and developing strategies which could turn on their heads the European policy debates that used to characterise these crises. The climate emergency has traditionally been the ultimate liberal European cause, as exemplified by European Commission-led initiatives such as net zero, the carbon border adjustment mechanism, and Fit for 55. Now, however, climate is being 'renationalised', as a green backlash becomes a powerful rallying cry for the anti-establishment right.

Migration, on the other hand, used to be the ultimate nationalist cause, but EU institutions and pro-European governments are now Europeanising the issue. The EU establishment has taken it up in an effort to find a shared European solution, most notably by adopting a common European migration and asylum policy.

Decisions taken by European leaders in the coming months on the other crises will also shape the future of Europe. Member states will need to answer questions on Ukraine's accession to the EU, support for the war effort, the budget for the European Green Deal, and indeed the

details of a common asylum policy.

Each of Europe's five crises will have many lives but it is at the ballot box where they will live, die, or be resurrected. The European election will not just be a competition between left and right – and Eurosceptics and pro-Europeans – but also a battle for supremacy between the different crisis tribes of Europe. Many voters will focus on preventing the return of a crisis of their own.

Methodology

This report is based on a public opinion poll of adult populations (aged 18 and over) conducted in September and October 2023 in 11 European countries (Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland). The total number of respondents was 15,081.

The polls were conducted by Datapraxis and YouGov in Denmark (1,040; 26 September – 2 October), France (2,079; 26 September – 6 October), Germany (2,036; 26 September – 5 October), Great Britain (2,043; 26 September – 2 October), Italy (1,530; 26 September – 5 October), Poland (1,069; 26 September – 4 October), Portugal (1,050; 26 September – 4 October), Romania (1,104; 26 September – 3 October), Spain (1,014; 26 September – 3 October), and Switzerland (1,103; 26 September – 3 October); and by Datapraxis and Norstat in Estonia (1,013; 26 September – 9 October).

In this policy brief, the results for "Europe" correspond to the above-mentioned 11 European countries, and the results for the "EU" correspond to the nine EU countries (ie, all except for Switzerland and Great Britain). Usually, a simple average across those countries is used, unless stated otherwise.

The segmentation into different "crisis tribes" is based on responses to the following question: "Which of the following issues has, over the past decade, most changed the way you look at your future?" with the available options being: (a) Climate change, (b) Immigration, (c) Covid-19 pandemic, (d) Russia's invasion of Ukraine, (e) Global economic turmoil, (f) Other, and (g) Don't know.

In the EU countries, respondents were asked to assess the EU's response to these crises by answering the following question: "Do you think the European Union has generally done a good or bad job when it comes to its handling of each of the following issues?" with the available options being: (a) climate change, (b) immigration, (c) Covid-19 pandemic, (d) Russia's invasion of Ukraine, (e) Global economic turmoil. Meanwhile, in Switzerland and

Great Britain, respondents assessed their government's performance on these issues by answering the following question: "Do you think [Swiss/UK government] has generally done a good or bad job when it comes to its handling of each of the following issues?"

The number of eligible voters in the upcoming European Parliament election (almost 372 million) was estimated using International IDEA's latest voting age population data for each of the EU27's member states, adjusted by Eurostat latest population data for the countries that have lowered the voting age for this election.

About the authors

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