
Press Release

Geographical Representation in EU Leadership Observatory 2023 confirms lack of representation of Central and Eastern European citizens in EU leadership.

An update of European Democracy Consulting's annual Observatory reveals a worsening of European citizens' representation, and calls on EU institutions, in particular the European Council and Commission, to take action to ensure a fairer representation of all European citizens.

Paris, France — February 13, 2023 — Today, European Democracy Consulting is proud to unveil its **Geographical Representation in EU Leadership Observatory 2023** (EU-GRLO). Now at its third edition the Observatory surveys 73 entities — EU institutions, advisory bodies, agencies, and other bodies —, 90 positions, and 512 office-holders from 1952 to the end of 2022.

Confirming conclusions from previous years, the EU-GRLO reveals the continued dominance of Western and Southern Europe over the Union's leadership. Since the 2004 EU enlargement, Western and Southern Europe have captured a combined **82% of all appointments, and 89% for EU institutions** — the Union's most prominent and influential positions. By contrast, Central and Eastern Europe have remained outliers, receiving 4% and 5.5% of appointments, thereby entrenching **their clear and continued under-representation**.

And these figures are not merely the result of past practices. In 2022 alone, Western and Southern European citizens received **88% of new appointments**, and 80% over the 2020-2022 triennium — up ten points from 2019-2021. Meanwhile, **only one citizen from Central and from Eastern Europe** were appointed in 2022.

Pro rata of regions' number of Member States, Western and Southern Europe still received **71% of appointments in 2020-2022** (a 9-point increase compared to the last triennium). Meanwhile, Central and Eastern Europe received **just over 6% and 5%** — down from 13% for Eastern Europe.

Even accounting for populations sizes, in 2022, citizens from Southern Europe earned **more than twice their fair share** of office-holders, compared to **only around half for Eastern Europe**. Despite receiving no appointments in 2022, Northern Europeans still received 1.8 times their fair share of representation over the triennium. Overall, poor 2022 figures for Central and Eastern Europe confirm our assessment that **previous encouraging numbers did not yet constitute a durable trend**.

Over the triennium, less visible appointments to EU agencies accounted for the entirety of appointments for Central and Eastern Europe, meaning that, over the past three years, **not a single citizen from Central or Eastern Europe** was elected to a non-EU agency leadership position.

Finally, while the European Commission and Council were only responsible for under 35% of all appointments between 2020 and 2022, **Member State governments, their representatives and appointees were involved in 62% of all appointments**. In the meantime, EU representatives directly elected by citizens were responsible for only 1.8% of appointments.

Based on these findings, European Democracy Consulting calls on the European Council and Commission to **acknowledge the lack of proper geographical representation** in the EU's leadership, its negative impact on citizens' inclusion, and their own central role in improving this situation. They must analyse the extent of this lack of representation, **establish clear goals and targets**, and **define bold actions**, including data collection, affirmative action policies, and an improved selection and retention process. Finally, they must track progress publicly through a yearly review.

European Democracy Consulting hopes this Observatory will contribute to improving all citizens' representation in our common institutions over time. As always, public scrutiny and clear lines of responsibility, in particular of the European Council and Commission, are essential in ensuring that proper representation is achieved. **"We call on all pro-Europeans to squarely face and address this clear case of continued under-representation** for the benefit of our Union's cohesion, and not to leave these conclusions to nationalist movements." says Ludvig Jakobsen, in charge of the EU-GRLO for European Democracy Consulting.