
Press Release

GRELO2024 notes worsening representation of Central and Eastern European citizens in EU leadership.

An update of European Democracy Consulting's annual Observatory reveals crumbling levels of representation for Central and Eastern European citizens in recent years, with none appointed in 2023. EDC calls on Member States and EU institutions, in particular the European Council and Commission, to take action to ensure the fairer representation of all European citizens.

Vienna, Austria — April 8, 2023 — Today, European Democracy Consulting is proud to unveil its **Geographical Representation in EU Leadership Observatory 2024** (GRELO2024). Now at its fourth edition GRELO surveys 73 entities — EU institutions, advisory bodies, agencies, and other bodies —, 90 positions, and 539 office-holders from 1952 to the end of 2023.

GRELO2024 confirms 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 **83% 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% of appointments, thereby entrenching **their clear and continued under-representation**.

But these figures are not merely the result of past practices. In 2023, Western European citizens alone received **73% of all new appointments**, and 60% over the 2021-2023 triennium — from 35% in 2018-2020. Meanwhile, **not a single citizen from Central and from Eastern Europe was appointed** to a leadership position in 2023. These regions accounted for under 2 and 4%, respectively, of appointments for 2021-2023, their lowest levels in years.

Pro rata of regions' number of Member States, Western Europe still received **over 51% of appointments in 2021-2023**, a 14-point increase compared to the last triennium. Even accounting for populations sizes, citizens from Western Europe earned **more than 1.5 their fair share** of office-holders in 2023, compared to **just over a quarter of their fair share for Central and Eastern Europe**.

Overall, figures for 2023 and for the 2021-2023 triennium show a **dramatic worsening of representation** for citizens from Central and Eastern Europe.

Finally, while the European Commission and Council were only responsible for 33% of appointments between 2020 and 2022, **Member State governments, their representatives and appointees were involved in 67% of all appointments**. In the meantime, EU representatives directly elected by citizens were responsible for only 3% 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' fair 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 worsening state of representation** for the benefit of our Union's cohesion, and not to leave these conclusions to nationalist movements." says Ludvig Jakobsen, in charge of GRELO2024 for European Democracy Consulting.