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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 or are scheduled to be held at the national level in Europe in 2022, 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.

Fifteen European countries have held direct presidential and/or parliamentary elections in 2022. Some dates may be subject to change due to snap elections, parliamentary votes of no confidence, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, or other factors. Thus far in 2022, snap elections have been held in Portugal, Serbia, Bulgaria, Italy, and Denmark.[2]

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. Such elections are often called by the ruling leader when party leaders believe they will make electoral gains.

[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 are the only countries in Europe with a full presidential system. See **Table 1**, footnote j 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 scheduled to be held in 2022, including those already held.

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).

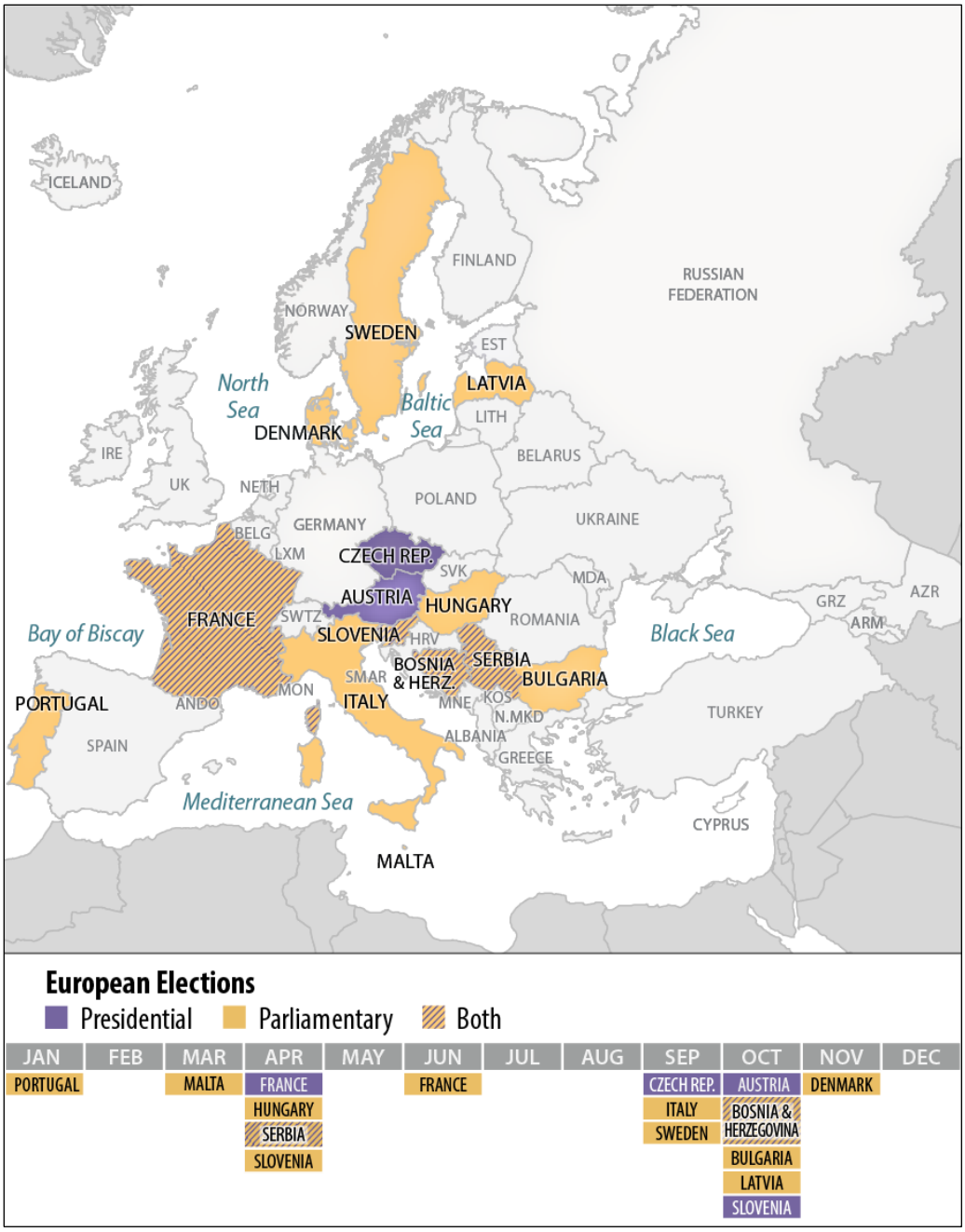
The "next election" column indicates the projected date when the next direct national election is expected to be held, based on law or practice. In most European countries, general elections occur at least once every four to six years. Unless laws or decisions in a particular country set a specific election 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 2022

Fifteen European countries are scheduled to hold presidential and/or parliamentary elections in 2022. These dates may be subject to change due to snap elections, parliamentary votes of no confidence, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, or other factors.

[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 1. European Elections Held in 2022



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 November 1, 2022. 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 1. European Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

	Parliamentary Elections		Presidential Elections	
Country	**Last Election/ Runoff**	**Next Election**	**Last Election/ Runoff**	**Next Election**
Albania	Apr. 25, 2021	Apr. 2026	Indirect	Indirect
Andorra	Apr. 7, 2019	Apr. 2023	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	Nov. 2023	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	Oct. 2, 2022[c]	Oct. 2026	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	Jan. 28, 2018/ Feb. 4, 2018	Feb. 2025
Czech Republic	Chamber of Deputies: Oct. 20-21, 2017 Senate: Sept. 23, 2022 - Oct. 1, 2022	Chamber of Deputies: Oct. 8-9, 2021 Senate: Sept. 2024	Jan. 12-13, 2018/ Jan. 26-27 2018	Jan. 2023
Denmark	Nov. 1, 2022 [d]	Oct. 2026	N/A	N/A
Estonia	Mar. 3, 2019	Mar. 2023	Indirect	Indirect
Finland	Apr. 14, 2019	Apr. 2023	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	July 7, 2019	July 2023	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[f]	Chamber of Deputies & Senate: Sept. 2027	Indirect	Indirect
Kosovo	Feb. 14, 2021	Feb. 2025	Indirect	Indirect

	Parliamentary Elections		Presidential Elections	
Country	**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. 14, 2018	Oct. 2023	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. 11, 2018	Feb. 2023	N/A	N/A
Montenegro	Aug. 30, 2020	Aug. 2024	Apr. 15, 2018	Apr. 2023
Netherlands	Mar. 17, 2021	Mar. 2025	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. 13, 2019	Sejm & Senate: Oct. 2023	June 28, 2020/ July 12, 2020	June 2025
Portugal	Jan. 30, 2022[g]	Jan. 2026	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	Apr. 3, 2022[h]	Apr. 2026	Apr. 3, 2022	Apr. 2027
Slovakia	Feb. 29, 2020	Feb. 2024	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: Nov. 10, 2019	Congress of Deputies & Senate: Nov. 2023	N/A	N/A
Sweden	Sept. 11, 2022	Sept. 13, 2026	N/A	N/A
Switzerland	National Council & Council of States: Oct. 20, 2019[i]	National Council & Council of States: Oct. 2023	Indirect	Indirect
Turkey[j]	June 24, 2018	June 2023	June 24, 2018	June 2023
Ukraine	July 21, 2019	July 2024	Mar. 31, 2019/ Apr. 21, 2019	Mar. 2024
United Kingdom	Dec. 12, 2019	May 2, 2024	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 November 1, 2022. 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 snap elections on June 20, 2021. The prime minister announced the snap elections 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 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 on Belarus and Russia, see CRS In Focus IF10814, *Belarus: An Overview*, by Cory Welt.

c. Bulgaria held snap parliamentary elections on October 2, 2022 after the Petkov government, a four-party coalition, fell in June 2022. This is the third parliamentary snap election in Bulgaria since 2021.

d. Denmark originally had parliamentary elections scheduled for June 2023, but held snap parliamentary elections on November 1, 2022. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced the snap elections after a member of her ruling coalition threatened to withdraw support over her handling of the country's controversial decision to cull several million mink during the COVID pandemic.

e. Constitutional amendments in 2017 changed the presidential elections to an indirect election. The 2018 presidential election in Georgia was the last in which the president was directly elected. Beginning in 2023, Georgia's president will be elected by Members of Parliament and local government representatives. See CRS Report R45307, *Georgia: Background and U.S. Policy*, by Cory Welt.

f. Italy held snap parliamentary elections on September 25, 2022 following Prime Minister Draghi's resignation and the dissolution of parliament on July 21, 2022.

g. In November 2021, the Portuguese president announced plans to dissolve parliament and called a snap election on January 30, 2022.

h. Parliamentary elections in Serbia were supposed to occur in 2024. However, in October 2020, President Aleksandar Vucic announced that parliamentary elections would be held earlier. Both the parliamentary and presidential elections were held on April 3, 2022.

i. 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 (last election was Apr. 28, 2019). Depending on the results of the election, a second round or runoff election may be required in some cantons.

j. 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 snap elections, re-electing 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://freedom house.org/sites/default/ files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf. For more information, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas and CRS Report R44000, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations In Brief*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

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