

GREEK ELECTIONS 2014

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GROUP

First thoughts on the 18 & 25 May 2014 elections in Greece

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Edited by Roman Gerodimos

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GPSG PAMPHLET #3

First thoughts on the 18 & 25 May 2014 elections in Greece

Editorial | **Domestic Message in a European Bottle**

A friend recently noted that the European Parliament election is like Eurovision: “nobody remembers it the next day, but still, everybody talks about it and bets on it beforehand”. This rule may be about to be broken in Greece: this particular EP election not only coincided with two rounds of local (municipal and regional) elections – therefore creating a cumulative *political event* – but it was also the first national contest since the historic elections of May and June 2012, which marked the breakdown of the post-1974 party system.

The recent elections were important for other reasons, too: for the first time ever, the appointment of the President of the European Commission became a personalised contest as part of the EP elections, raising hopes for slightly more democratically accountable EU institutions (although it remains to be seen whether these expectations will be fulfilled). The continuing impact of fiscal austerity across the continent, the root causes of the rise of radical Euroscepticism, fears over extremism, the apparent lack of vision and leadership and the challenges of immigration and integration are all key issues that affect everyone in the EU – issues that are seeking robust and comprehensive solutions.

However, it would be fair to say that the emphasis within Europe’s national public spheres was on domestic issues and domestic emotions – of fear, anger and frustration, rather than hope and aspiration. In Greece the electorate sent a signal of scepticism and caution rather than one of radical change or endorsement of any particular party. It thus sustained the fragmentation of the political system with no party gaining more than 27% of the vote and with seven parties managing to cross the 3% threshold of representation at the EP.

One phenomenon that should not be overlooked – and which may, in fact, provide us with an indication as to where the political system is heading – is the outlook in three major cities (Athens, Thessaloniki and Piraeus), the mayoral contests of which have always been seen as a barometer for the electoral fortunes of one party or another. It is, thus, interesting that in Athens and Thessaloniki we saw the re-election of two highly successful and popular moderates who, while being endorsed by a broad coalition of centrist political organisations, have refused to be associated with particular political parties; while, in Piraeus the political contest was dominated, and won, by the managers of the local football club (amongst other business interests) who managed to mobilise and command the support of an apolitical but highly motivated group of followers.

Continuing a tradition that started in 2012, the Greek Politics Specialist Group (GPSG) invited short commentaries from its members, colleagues and affiliates as a first ‘rapid’ response to the election results. The 26 articles in this collection provide a diverse range of viewpoints and interpretations, although they seem to concur on the fragmented state of the political system and express concern at the consolidation and further rise of the neo-Nazi far right. This pamphlet is by no means a definitive account of the election. It is merely a forum – an opportunity for colleagues to reflect on these important events, but also a pluralistic representation of the *status quo*, highlighting points of contention and raising questions about the future of the Greek and indeed the European political system. We hope that this publication will lead to a fruitful dialogue and welcome further contributions through our various outlets, such as the GPSG Working Papers series, our newsletter and, of course, our events.

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1| Petros Vamvakas and Christina Kulich

In Greece the “European Project” is still on course

The results of the elections of May 18 and 25, 2014, point to interesting trends of varying significance on several levels. First, although the focus of most commentary has been on the local, municipal, regional, and European implications, what has thus far escaped notice is that the troubled Greek political system itself belongs in the “win” category, since it survived the direst predictions about its ability to withstand yet another crisis.

These elections have provided a snapshot of an ongoing metamorphosis of the Greek party system, which has recently experienced a precipitous collapse and which currently lacks both the hegemonic personalities of the past and mature political organizations with distinct political platforms. European parliamentary elections have served to stabilize the current arrangement, which is far preferable than further realignment or collapse.

On the municipal and regional level, almost two decades after the initial decentralization reforms, which brought on the much-maligned Kapodistrias and Kallikratis reorganizations, these elections were an overall success, as measured by a greater level of participation at the grass-roots level. This process began with the 2010 vote, as objections and resistance to the restructuring began to subside and regional and municipal identities consolidated; it was strengthened as candidates in 2014 sought shelter from national parties in localities. Local and regional policy makers therefore achieved another “win,” namely a greater local voice, less, if not un-hindered by the politics and structures of Athens-centric politics.

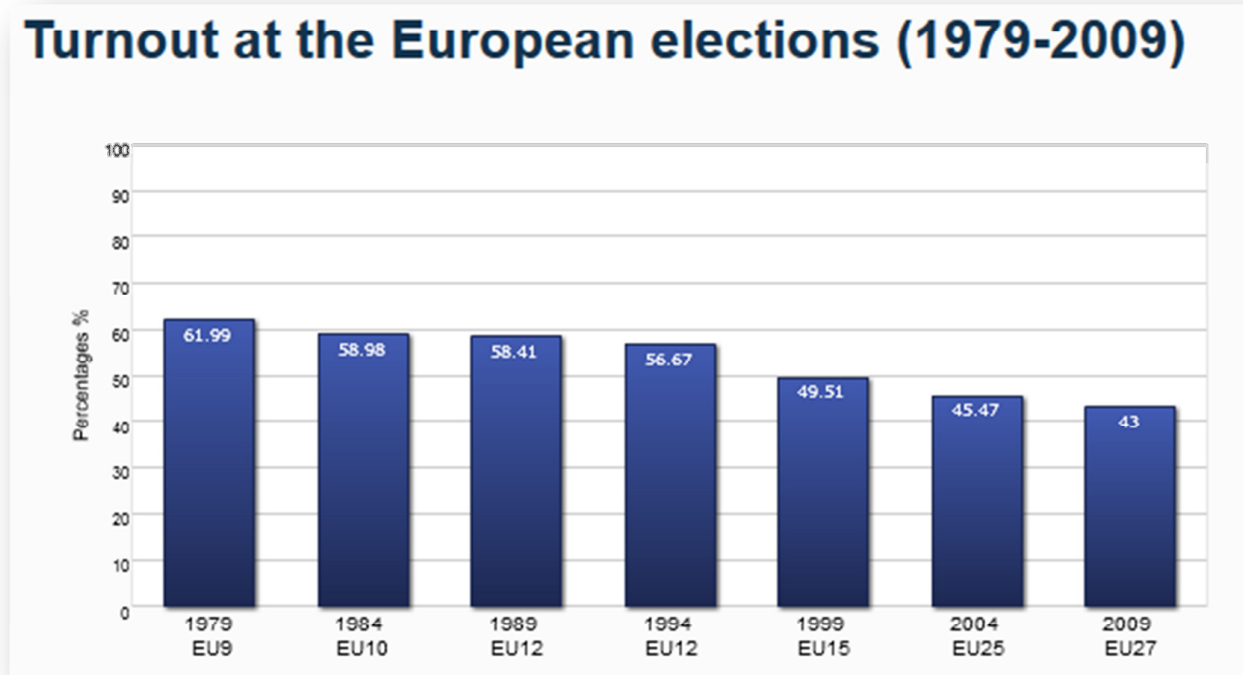
However, the break from the national party organizations and the sustained economic and political crisis also did allow populist and non-democratic candidates to become vehicles of interest articulation and popular anger on the local level. The increase in the votes received by ultra nationalist candidates, or the overt successful participation of football personalities, points to the vulnerability of a hurting and largely disenfranchised working class to populism. The mayoral election results in Piraeus and Volos illustrate well how football fan appeal was the path to elected political office.

A much criticized government tactic of coordinating the European parliamentary elections with the second round of municipal and regional elections also proved to be successful, with Greece posting a higher than average turnout in the European elections. The 59.96% participation rate in Greece was well above the European average of 43% and especially noteworthy in view of the prolonged economic crisis, much hated austerity, and consistent anti-Europe sentiment.

One way to read this is that, despite the rise in Euro-skepticism throughout the continent, Greece and the rest of its Mediterranean neighbors continue to be overall supporters of the European project, with participation proving relevance or perhaps even legitimacy. According to European Parliament official turnout tracking, although participation in 2014 elections was similar to the 2009 level of 43%, in the case of Greece, the number has risen from 52.2% to 59.9%. Although in the other Mediterranean states participation stayed at or slightly lower than the 2009 level, the increase in Greece is significant.

The overall significance of the electoral results of May 18 and 25 is that the Greek political system is moving from traditional hegemonic leader-led parties toward platform-based political organizations. There was also an increase in grass-roots organization and popular voice, even though it allowed a larger number of undemocratic individuals and voices to be heard, this was paradoxically more democratic in process.

The municipal/regional and Euro-parliamentary elections in Greece of May 2014 provide clear evidence that the European project of regionalism over nation-states and party politics over populism is well on its way.



Source: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/000cccd9d4/Turnout-\(1979-2009\).html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/000cccd9d4/Turnout-(1979-2009).html)

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2| Vasileios Karakasis

Crisis as a constant

The outcome of the European elections indicated an impressive rise of protest parties critical of the current status quo in Brussels. More specifically, Eurosceptic (that reject the EU project and establishment in general) and Euro-critical (that question the current bureaucratic and political status quo in Brussels) parties having various “flavors”, from Austria, France, Britain, Greece and Denmark gained a foothold in the European Parliament. The international media used the buzzword “earthquake” to capture these results. If someone follows the numbers, they would disagree with this catchy narrative since the majority of the seats has been gained by the so-called pro-EU parties.

Adding to this, European Parliament elections have been always considered a tailor-made environment for a protest vote, since they provide voters with the opportunity to signal a firm message against the EU institutions’ or the government parties’ policies without running the risk of having an ideologue directly put into a position of power.

Furthermore, the pro-EU parties feel relieved by the significant ideological (left-wing and right-wing) dividing lines within the Eurosceptic and the Euro-critical parties. These dividing lines are likely to impede the capitalization of this “anti-EU stance” into an integrated single voice. In other words, the ideological divisions – attributed to the protest parties, critical of (the current status of) the EU – might hinder the delivery of a united, concrete and politically viable “anti-EU message”. Thus, the pro-EU parties consider that the current outcome cannot fundamentally reshape the political landscape in the EU.

Nevertheless, this optimistic picture might become subject to further questioning in the near future. This assumption moves beyond the political momentum that the protest parties have gained in these elections. In 2005, the citizens of France and The Netherlands had registered their non-acceptance on the EU constitution during the respective referenda. The reason why they did this should have already become an issue of a more profound study (or concern) for the EU officials. Legitimacy is here the keyword. In a period of increasing EU integration, the EU takes daily decisions with an enormous impact on the lives of its citizens. However, these decisions fall short of the proper transparency. There are many EU citizens who strongly believe that non-elected Brussels’ officials adopt a mix of technocracy intertwined with lobbying and intergovernmental negotiation to come up with their policy proposals.

Unfortunately, transparency, political responsibility and an attentive approach to the particularities reflecting each member’s idiosyncrasy and sensitivities have been left aside. Bearing this in mind, the European Parliament, being the only EU supranational body whose members are directly elected by the citizens – even after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty – looks relatively weak when compared to the European Commission (whose members are mainly appointed by the governments) and the Council (the governments of the member states). Thus, due to constitutional constraints, the only elected EU body does not have a strong say in the lives of the EU citizens although the people have provided it with the legitimacy to do so. Thus, the low turnout in the European Elections as well as the vote of disapproval should not take us by surprise.

Another challenge is closely related to the efficiency of the EU in cracking the crisis down. The concept of crisis, in general, emerges when shared values and meanings, which previously served a community well, break from the reality of a particular situation. In our case, the particular situation is the economic turbulence, the recession and the consequent unemployment that have hit a majority of the EU citizens.

Nevertheless, what we are facing in Europe is not a particular situation. After six consecutive years of discussions, blame-games, austerity-laden policies and pointing fingers over the economic turbulence – along with its socio-economic-security-cultural effects – in our region and how it should be handled, the EU has reached a point where ‘crisis’ has been established as a constant rather than an exceptional and temporary situation for Europe in its entirety. The size of the unemployment rate in the EU in general, seems reluctant to decrease while youth unemployment has reached extremely dangerous records in the Mediterranean countries.

The whole situation has been sharply exacerbated by the hugely augmenting influx of immigrants and refugees especially in the EU periphery states, emanating mainly from countries suffering from unrest (like Libya, Egypt, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc). As a consequence, people within certain EU member states are incapable even of fulfilling basic humanitarian needs since they struggle to put food on their table, heat their houses and provide for basic health care. Thus, the image of the EU and the Eurozone has been eroded since both have become synonymous to austerity-driven measures and the existing poverty.

To the extent EU officials and leaders prove to be incapable of pragmatically echoing and addressing these issues, the support for the European institutions will follow a downward trend. The results of the EU elections signaled a loss of trust in the current European political, institutional and monetary edifice. If the EU leaders do not carefully read into the reasons of these results and do not draw the proper lessons, they might encounter even bigger surprises in the 2019 elections.

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3| Zoe Lefkofridi

Europe's Odyssey

Many European Union (EU) citizens (but *not more* than in the past) abstained from the European Parliament (EP) election – although [in varied proportions](#) across member states. In relative terms, Greece's 40% abstention rate classifies among the “better” performances (e.g. compared with 87% in Slovakia).

What about citizens' party choices? Was this a vote *against* Europe? Was it against national handlings of the crisis? Unlike the past, it is extremely difficult to discern whether support for fringe and/or extreme parties actually expresses opposition to the EU or opposition to domestic governmental policies – as the EU and domestic policy are increasingly interwoven. Governing Greece during the crisis while presiding in the EU in 2014 has been the best example for this.

During the crisis the inter-relationship of the supranational and domestic policy was more evident than ever and eurosceptics did well – but again, in [varied degrees](#) across Europe. Crucially, eurocritics are, and have always been, coming from the two opposite poles of the political spectrum. Although both camps may use populist rhetoric, there are huge ideological [differences](#) between the two, which result in very different views about “what is wrong” in the EU.

Within the extreme left camp, only a few (e.g. the Greek Communist party, KKE) advocate in favor of exit from the Union. Radical left messages were more about [a different Europe](#), rather than about demolishing the project. And though the Lista Tsipras failed to pass the threshold in Italy, it was nonetheless an effort to Europeanize national politics and to mobilize citizens across borders.

On the other extreme pole, right-wing nationalists who aim at destroying the EU from within scored well in France, UK, Denmark, Austria, Finland, Hungary and in Greece. It remains to be seen whether non-attached nationalist parties [will be able to create an ideologically coherent political group](#) in the elected EP. Most of them take careful distance from Greek Golden Dawn (GD) which was supported by a respectable 9.4 % of Greek voters; despite GD members' imprisonment after [the murder](#) of anti-fascist musician Fyssas, GD supporters [remained loyal and helped it enter the EP](#).

If anything, the EP election results in Greece and in Europe show that for a big part of European citizens, the status quo is unsustainable. Change is necessary – but in which direction? Though the message for change has been understood, members of the European Council disagree on [what to change and how](#). During the last decade, ever bigger – and increasingly interrelated – obstacles arise in front of them: the financial crisis, [declining trust in national and EU institutions](#), the rise of Eurosceptics...

It seems that European political elites in government are currently going through an “Odyssey”. Yet, a key problem in this adventurous (and dangerous) collective journey is that they have left the “common quest” [“Europe: Our common quest” is the official [logo](#) of the 2014 Greek presidency] – their “Ithaca” – largely under-defined.

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4| Dimitris Rapidis

Elections that were not at all European

Greece was amongst these member-states of the European Union (EU) where local elections coincided with European Parliament (EP) Elections. The interpretation of the outcome in both ballot boxes is broader than expected: local elections, except for the prefecture of Attica, were marked by the prevalence of local political figures beyond party-political identification, who in many cases won by a landslide. On the other hand, European elections were marked by the historical win of Syriza, the radical-left, major opposition party in Greece, but also by a number of issues that necessitate imminent action.

Regarding the local elections, the most astonishing outcome was the win of Rena Dourou, candidate of Syriza in Attica. In the most densely populated and crisis-affected region of the country in terms of unemployment and poverty, the local character of the elections was swept away by a strong polarization between the government coalition and the main opposition party.

Regarding the EP elections, we need to point out that apart from Syriza's historical success, there are some striking conclusions and observations we can make: the first one is the lowering of abstention rates, especially comparing to the EU average; the second one is the thrive of pluralism, as more than 40 political parties participated in the elections; the third one is the extremely low electoral appeal of the liberal alliance "Bridges" endorsed by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and by the candidate for the European Commission Presidency Guy Verhofstadt; the fourth one is the increase of Golden Dawn's electoral performance, having reached almost 10% and electing 3 MEPs.

Nonetheless, I strongly believe that the fundamental issues of these EP elections were never addressed. Four years now, the European Union and mainly Greece are faced with skyrocketed youth unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and fragmentation, unrest and exhausting austerity policies. None of the political parties endeavoured to launch the debate or elaborate concrete proposals to tackle these issues, as well as other ones being discussed over the past years, such as growth, immigration policies, data protection, education, and labour mobility.

In this respect, the agenda was shifted towards euroscepticism and the extreme right as if these phenomena are cut from the political, economic, and social reality in the EU. All along the electoral period, the media and the major political parties invested in the superficial dilemma between the possible risks entrenched with the win of Syriza against political stability on the one hand, and the broad disapproval of austerity politics on the other hand. EP elections were not at all "European", but literally a step towards national elections.

The last thing that came up with these dual elections is the landslide of DEB (the Party of Friendship, Equality and Peace), which is rooted in and supported by the Muslim minority of Thrace. This development – cause and effect of socio-economic and identity cleavages being created in the region after decades of discrimination by the central state – can profoundly reshape the balance between Greece and Turkey, especially in a period of turbulence for both countries.

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5| Alexander Katsaitis

More noise, less influence

Results for the European Parliament (EP) elections suggest an overall sceptical but pro-European, Greek public attitude. The MEPs elected on pro-/anti-EU platforms in the backdrop of the austerity measures are largely first timers. While more than half of the seats will go to the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) and the European People's Party (EPP), the rest will be patchily distributed. As such, it is more likely that national/ political representation will be less influential overall. The MEPs heading to Brussels must decide which Political Groups (PGs) they will join; understand the practical workings of the Institution; and form a strategy to regain votes lost to the extreme-right.

The distribution of votes highlights political fragmentation. Syriza came in first with 26.5% of the vote slightly overpassing both initial assumptions and the main government party of New Democracy (22.7%), which has born additional political costs due to the austerity-measures implemented. Third party Golden Dawn (9.4%), a Nazi-like outfit, maintained its share of hard-core disenchanted voters. Newer outfits, Elia (8%), Potami (6.6%) and Independent Greeks (ANEL) (3.46%) received a smaller share of the vote. As predicted, the communist party (KKE) got 6%.

Where will the Greek MEPs go? Syriza (6 MEPs) is Eurosceptic but its discourse aims at an "alternative" Europe rather than dissolving the project. In a weird combo with the anti-EU KKE (2 MEPs), Syriza will join GUE/NGL. They will be able to influence the direction of their PG as Mr Tsipras was its candidate for the presidency of the European Commission, but it will have little influence overall in the European Parliament: GUE/NGL (5.6%) is unlikely to be asked or join an alliance with major political groups.

New Democracy will send its 5 MEPs to the EPP and may be able to utilize established networks, but is a small fraction of the party. Elia and Potami will most likely join the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats but with 2 MEPs each and little experience less can be expected. It remains to be seen where anti-EU ANEL will place its 1 MEP, while the Golden Dawn (3 seats) will be isolated along with other extreme-right parties.

What can one expect from this configuration? Firstly, more brewing of the political soup in Greece is necessary. All parties need a larger number of voters in order to gain a substantial majority of support at the national level and establish strong political poles. Secondly, MEPs will attempt raise the profile of EU-wide issues that affect the South so as to gain votes, including those lost to the extreme-right. Syriza, through GUE/ NGL, has much better chances and will be louder as it attempts to turn on the heat on the national government. Thirdly, the communication between national parties and their MEPs will be intense, as this is the most polarized and politicized European Parliament ever elected. Debates in the EP will be nationally guided and framed.

Overall, for Greece, the next few years will see the extended dominance of national level parties over their MEPs as they attempt to win votes - a trend that should, in fact, be reversed in order to address EU issues with the appropriate European framework. This suggests that we are likely to witness more political turbulence with little practical influence in the EP.

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6| George Kyris

A different kind of euroscepticism

The unprecedented impact of the Eurozone crisis in Greece made the 2014 European Parliament elections the most anticipated in the history of the country. This was mainly because the elections became an opportunity to test public sentiment towards the EU. Indeed, recent years have seen a dramatic decrease of EU support in Greece: upon joining the Eurozone, 51% of Greeks had a positive image of the EU, considerably more than the rest of the EU (42%) but in late 2013 this percentage had dropped to an all-time low of 16%, which was also the lowest across the EU. In contrast, half of Greeks now held a negative image.

Yet, Greek support of EU membership has not seen an equally impressive decrease, which seems to suggest that, despite being frustrated with the way the EU has dealt with the crisis, Greeks do not challenge their belonging to the 'European family'.

Indeed, the ballot gave a similar message and uncovered a trend of euroscepticism quite different to other parts of Europe. Unlike countries like the UK or France, calls for an exit from the EU did not win many Greek votes- indeed the parties which support a Grexit (the Golden Dawn and the Communist Party (KKE)) remained a small minority. Yet, the victory of left-wing Syriza, which campaigned for a 'different Europe' and a 'radical anti-systemic choice', should be read as a vote against the status quo of reform efforts on the track of EU-agreed bailouts, which the coalition partners of New Democracy and PASOK represented.

Similarly, smaller parties which fought the elections battle on calls for a different Europe, like the newcomer The River (To Potami), also secured important gains. As a result, rather than challenging the EU in its whole, Greek euroscepticism seems to question the type of European integration people get.

While the left in Greece has so far failed to promote a credible agenda, their success is important for the rest of Europe, testing how Europeans feel and hopefully triggering a debate on the future of the EU.

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7| Konstantinos Margaritis

What's wrong with Europe?

Between the 22nd and the 25th of May, over 400 million European citizens had the opportunity to influence the future of the Union by voting for their 751 representatives in the European Parliament – a unique process, if we take into account the extensive role of the Parliament following the Lisbon Treaty.

Yet, an important outcome of the electoral process is the rise of eurosceptics, including some subscribing to an extremist ideology, coming from the Left, as well as from the Right. The idea that the EU has failed to fulfill peoples' demands and needs, and therefore member states have to take the situation into their own hands, appeared to be a quite popular perception among EU citizens. The increasingly held view that the EU simply acts like a "rigid, bureaucratic, law-producing machine", as opposed to a political organisation in transition to federalism, has been strengthened even more after the 2014 elections. So, the main question here is what has been wrong with the EU?

The Union does not inspire because it *cannot* inspire. Since the establishment of the Communities in the 1950s, the whole integration process has been focused merely on the economic paradigm, whilst leaving all other aspects in their early stages. In a major field of public interest such as foreign policy, and despite the institutional progress towards common external action, the EU is far from achieving its aim of becoming a pillar of stability and peace in the wider continent. Foreign policy is still decided under strict national standards with occasionally contradicting opinions amongst member states (e.g. Libya); in other cases, the EU just seems unable to drastically influence or react to a series of events (e.g. Ukraine).

Additionally, in the recent case of the economic crisis, the Union has been proven highly unprepared to deal with the situation. The inadequately elaborated emergency funding programmes of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM) were succeeded by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) under a peculiar institutional framework where a bunch of senior bureaucrats obtained excessive powers without any form of accountability or democratic legitimacy. The political results of the Union's (lack of) strategy was a North/South divide, in which the former are complaining for paying the debts of the "intractable" latter and the latter for their "impoverishment" for the benefit of the former under the German hegemonic strategy. This has created an excessively divisive environment that aggravates the lack of trust amongst European nations.

The process of European integration was initially based on consensus between the member states, with the prospect of building up a common European identity. After more than 60 years, the latter is still dominated by the former. The member states are as "European" as their national priorities allow them to be. In that sense, the EU seems to have got stuck somewhere in history. The public verdict is clear: the EU is at a crossroads: the time for crucial decisions for the future of Europe has come. Will the EU progress on the principles set by its founding fathers, towards a true Union of people under a new institutional architecture or will it remain stagnant waiting for its slow ending?

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8| Theofanis Exadaktylos

The travelling circus of the triple elections in Greece

The results of the 2014 triple elections for Greece produced enough convoluted and, at the same time, completely conflicting messages that rightfully allow (almost) every political force to have something to celebrate; however, for the wrong reasons.

Clearly the outcome in all three contests not only demonstrates the persisting and deep fragmentation of the political system in Greece, but also the emergence and establishment of new political cleavages that have the potential of creating interesting polarizations within Greek society once again. Greece is delegating—amongst others—a footballer, a couple of media stars and three neo-Nazis to represent its interests in the European Parliament, and has elected convicts and gangsters to head a few local councils.

Beyond this travelling circus, the outcome of the elections signals the desire of the electorate to experience broader cooperation at different levels alongside a strong momentum against austerity that cannot be overlooked. This means that the coalition government will be forced into a discussion of saving face and trying to steer its policies towards a more general consensus.

Looking at the **local and regional electoral results**, there are certain notable findings:

First of all, **independent local or regional candidates** with a proven record of change are the true winners, illustrating that at the local level citizens turn to people who have made some visible impact. Turning to specific parties, **New Democracy** managed to gain plenty of regional and local councils but lost the battle in places where sensitive social issues were at stake (e.g. Attica) or where internal political conflict prevailed in the choice of candidates (e.g. Central Macedonia). At the same time, it is consolidating the power of certain party members in rural Greece. **Syriza** managed to secure Attica, albeit with a marginal difference and riding the wave of its own momentum, but has failed to make a wider impact. It still needs to prove itself as a serious contender and has a steep learning curve to understand the particulars of a local election.

PASOK, under the shade of the **Olive Tree** (Elia) coalition has not made any direct gains; however, candidates previously associated with the party (but running as independent) have managed to get reelected, and in some cases, with relative comfort, demonstrating that the center-left space is still there but is lacking direction and coordination. **KKE** (the Communist Party) has failed to capture the vote of the left once again and remains in the fringes of the local government system apart from a couple of cases, where precedence existed. The **Independent Greeks** (ANEL) lost considerable ground and verified a firework effect that existed for their party. The rising star of parliamentary politics, the **Democratic Left** (DIMAR) has truly failed to convince and the future of the party looks ambiguous.

And back to the **Golden Dawn**: despite the arrest of many of its MPs and the placement of members who are currently under criminal investigation as candidates, it has drawn voters in almost every region and made a deep impact in the composition of local and regional councils. Although it cannot gain control in any of them, we can make the safe assumption that they are here to stay as a stigma on Greek local government.

In the **European Parliament elections** the picture is similar. Greece has managed to project a national pattern onto the European level. None of the newly elected MEPs has prior experience of Europe as such, which begs the question of socialization with established elites in Brussels. In terms of the party votes, the picture is confusing as the character and the

human geography of these elections remained unclear. **Syriza** was counting on a plebiscite type of an election against the coalition government that never materialized, celebrating a Pyrrhic victory of topping the results but reaching an upper limit. **New Democracy** rallied its electorate base but failed to pass the post first; yet, it celebrated the inability of Syriza to pull its weight forward as its own victory. **PASOK** celebrated maintaining a high single-digit percentage while still engaging in a navel-gazing exercise. **The River**, led by a popular non-aligned journalist, despite its short-term existence has made an impressive start, securing two seats in the European Parliament but without a specific platform. **The Democratic Left** failed to attract enough voters to elect a single MEP and is facing an identity crisis—its leader resigning few days later. Finally, **Golden Dawn** is celebrating sending three neo-fascist MEPs into Brussels, riding the European zeitgeist, while the other parties look at them in awe and scapegoat them for their own failures.

So there it is: the Greek habit of not seeing the forest for the trees emerges once more. This time however, the oxymoron is that the left is no longer the progressive force but has turned into a conservative opponent of the conservative forces. It seems that the Metapolitefsi era has not ended: a copycat system of state corporatism that still supports (another type of) favoritism, clientelism, and political protection networks is fermenting in the quarters of the left. This situation suits the Greek right, which steps on this model encouraging a Greek type of Peronism.

It seemed particularly easy to declare oneself at this moment in time a “leftist” considering who this New Left incorporates. It is also easy to see—beyond those deeply affected by the recent crisis and the politics of the past few decades—that voters are drawn into a type of populism that does not promise true human emancipation and a social and political overhaul, but rather tries to covertly reinstate the previous equilibrium point. **This situation starts resembling a fancy gala with a strict guest list**: some people found out a bit later and did not RSVP, yet they demand that the gala is rearranged including them as guests.

A true progressive left would not simply hand out empty promises, but rather it would demand the radical rebirth of a country on socially fair foundations—not those of the previous shamolic system. As far as the extreme right is concerned, at least a migrant doctor was elected as mayor of a town in the Peloponnese, previously marred by racist attacks on foreign strawberry-pickers.

Therefore, what’s next? The coalition government will have to prove itself from scratch. The opposition leading party, Syriza, will have to prove itself as a potential party of government and throw bridges across the political spectrum to find allies. The extreme right is here to stay and this will require a realistic approach from the democratic political spectrum. As for the center-left, the true challenge will be getting their ducks in line and proceed to the complete reorganization of its political space.

The political developments will be significant, especially as discussions start emerging on the appointment of the next President of the Republic and the potential reform of the parliamentary and electoral systems, in light of the heavy weight of a questionably sustainable debt.

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9| Eri Bertsou

Fragmentation is here to stay

Last Sunday's European Parliament elections results in Greece suggest that the fragmentation of the party system is here to stay, and so is, unfortunately, a basis for support for the extreme right Golden Dawn. For the foreseeable future, no party is likely to achieve the vote shares the Greek political landscape was accustomed to prior to the crisis. Greek voters are still eager to remain within the EU structure, are still profoundly weary of the austerity program and are still reluctant to give any single political party or leader a blank cheque.

In fact, it would be best to interpret the EP election results from Greece as an indication of the current electoral sentiment than as a second order election of less importance. First, participation in this EP election went up by 5.6% points and reversed the continuous downward turnout trend. Although turnout is still a few percentage points lower than in the last national election, it does suggest an increasing citizen interest in European Parliament elections.

Secondly, and most importantly, Europe no longer represents a distant bureaucratic machine and a little understood integration project. For most Greek citizens, the European Union has assumed a much more tangible and forceful presence in the politics of the country with the austerity policies and reform program of the past four years. What is decided in Europe, by whom, and what should Greece's position in the EU be, have become part of the national political public sphere since the onset of the crisis. Therefore, although the issue of Europe has not replaced the domestic political cleavages in this election, it has certainly infiltrated the realm of national politics in Greece.

Finally, in last Sunday's EP election voters did not opt for smaller or fringe parties in order to protest or simply because 'less is at stake'. Electoral choices indicate a consolidation of the picture that emerged in the last national election, apart from some expected penalisation for the governing parties. Further, results show that Greek voters are still unconvinced about who is capable to steer the country towards safe harbours and how. Similarly, the third place achieved by Golden Dawn ominously reflects a more solidified support basis, which will take economic, political, but also social change to undo.

The fragmentation and polarisation of the party system will stay on, which on a positive note, means political leaders will be forced to cooperate and engage with each other if they wish to govern effectively. Even if national elections were held today, there is little reason to believe Greek voters would vote any different than they did last Sunday.

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10| Dimitris Tsarouhas

Scepticism and renewal

The results of the 2014 local and EU elections have confirmed a number of trends visible in the Greek political system. On the other hand, they have also opened up new prospects for the renewal of Greek political life and therein lies the prospect for positive change in Greece:

1) **The two main** political parties have lost votes and failed to convince a sceptical electorate. Even if one plausibly assumes greater polarization ahead of the next general election, big parties will have to get used to the idea of coalition governments and the need to reach out to political opponents on a genuine rather than opportunistic basis. It is on that basis that talks over electoral law reform should be conducted.

2) **The Golden Dawn** is here to stay, and (most of) its supporters are not willing to change their voting behavior any time soon. The political establishment will have to cope with facts rather than wishful-thinking-type proclamations about 'misguided voters' and the like.

3) **The centre-left's** decline continues and its inability to unite to offer a third pole in Greek party politics makes political renewal in other parties more difficult too. Its potential has not disappeared, however, and the next months will be crucial on that front.

4) Pre-election polls got a number of facts wrong, but rightly discerned that **protest voting** directed towards splinter parties of larger party families was on decline. The Independent Greeks (ANEL) and Democratic Left (DIMAR) will now face existentialist issues and their prospects look dim.

There were some very important positive trends in this election that offer hope for the future:

1) **Voter turnout** proved relatively high. Unjust austerity and a massive socio-economic and political crisis did not deter most Greeks from making their vote count.

2) In the **two largest cities** of the country, progressive mayors with no party-political affiliation emerged victorious. They offer hope for renewal in local politics, the stepping stone for much larger renewal at national level. Choosing to defy polarization and empty words for on-the-ground attempts to deal with real problems and shed progressive light on their policies, the two re-elected mayors are proof that deeds speak louder than (old-fashioned, full of clichés) words.

3) A **new generation** of young, well-educated and energetic people took active part in those elections, winning a number of mayoralities across the country and ranking highly on voters' preferences in the EU election. They also hold the promise of renewal alive with their reformist attitude to public policy and willingness to borrow best practice examples from elsewhere. They swelled the ranks of different parties, including the Olive coalition (Elia) and The River party (To Potami). They were not deterred by the resistance of old party politics, and the public confirmed its willingness to see real change occur at different levels of Greek political life.

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11 | Michael Nevradakis

Old habits die hard

The 2014 European parliamentary elections in Greece took on a significance that they did not previously enjoy. Viewed as a referendum on the policies of the current government and the Troika of lenders, many hoped that a clear victory of the left would deliver a clear message of rejection. This message was, at best, partially delivered.

Syriza emerged as the frontrunner, surpassing New Democracy by almost 4%. However, Syriza's percentage slightly *decreased* compared to the June 2012 parliamentary elections. This result can perhaps be decoded by examining the party's top vote-getters. Newly-elected representatives such as Manolis Glezos, are viewed as representing the traditional, patriotic left, perhaps signaling a call for Syriza to prioritize Greece's pressing national concerns over a broader European agenda. Whether the party's politics meet expectations remains to be seen, however.

For all of the attention paid by international media to the rise of Golden Dawn, the far-right in Greece earned a smaller percentage than in several other European countries. This should not be a surprise, considering the deeper roots of the far-right elsewhere in Europe, and it is wrong to single out Greece without examining the causes of the far right's more robust growth on the European continent.

The results also demonstrate the continued power that the traditional mass media still wield, as evidenced by the emergence of To Potami (The River). Purely a media creation, To Potami received an inordinate amount of airtime and column space compared to other smaller but established political movements, despite not presenting any discernable political platform. This is not surprising, when considering that (Potami leader) Theodorakis has enjoyed a long career with some of these very same media outlets.

Old voting allegiances also have proven to be resilient. Despite a six-point decline, New Democracy still earned over one million votes nationwide, while Elia, the continuation of PASOK, exceeded perhaps even its own expectations by garnering 8%. It should be noted, however, that this is a record low for a party which was, at one time, Greece's ruling dynasty. The traditional major parties are experiencing a prolonged, slow death, but when one combines the votes received by New Democracy and Elia with those received by their former coalition partners (Democratic Left and LAOS) and by To Potami, which is likely to be favorable towards the current government's policies, over 40% of voters are represented, indicating that old habits die hard, or manifest themselves in new forms.

A final development of note is the surprisingly low figures by parties such as EPAM, ANTARSYA, Gefyres, and the Eco-Greens, the latter of whom were previously in the European parliament. Each represents a particular ideological background, but with voter abstention remaining high and with many voting strategically against either New Democracy or Syriza, these parties were not able to meet expectations, finishing below 1%. An open declaration issued by the Independent Greeks (ANEL) after the elections, calling for the unification of Greece's anti-memorandum parties, may serve as the catalyst that will help these parties emerge onto the electoral forefront in the future.

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12| Theodore Chadjipadelis

Between first and second order

Theoretically speaking European Parliament elections are second-order elections, i.e. less important than parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, this time EP elections were both first and second order. Or something between a rock and a hard place... The electoral competition in Greece is currently expressed along two principal axes: the axis on the question of governance and the usual "left - right" axis. The first describes the potential of party coalitions, while the second describes the ideological identity of the poles in the party system.

Eventually the elections could be characterized as "much ado about nothing". For the parties at the one end ("anti-Memorandum"): Syriza managed to maintain the share of the vote they took in June 2012. Independent Greeks (ANEL) – the equivalent of Syriza on the right-wing pole – lost 4%, receiving only 3.4% of the vote. KKE (Communist Party), not considered a potential government partner for SYRIZA, reached 6%, i.e. 1.4% more than in the parliamentary elections. Golden Dawn got 9.4% (2.5% more than in 2012). Hence, this anti-Memorandum pole received an aggregate of 45.3% (from 45.8% in 2012), with the maximum share of a possible government coalition (Syriza and Independent Greeks) being 29.9%.

As for the other pole, New Democracy (ND), facing alternative competitors in the right-wing scale lost 6.9% from their 2012 share, and PASOK (part of the "Olive Tree" coalition) gathered 8%, i.e. losing 4.3%. The two add up to 30.8%, down from 42% in June 2012. A newly established party, "the River" (To Potami) reached 6.6%, while the initial partner of the Samaras coalition government (DIMAR, Democratic Left) received 1.2% (from 6.2% in 2012). This configuration resembles a walk on the edge, challenging the country's stability. Managing a large-scale financial crisis must be separated from everyday life. Without a solid strategic plan, Greece cannot move forward.

On the left-right axis Syriza maintains its dominant position on the left: Syriza, PASOK/"Olive Tree", KKE, "the River" and DIMAR all collected a sum of 48.3%. In the space of the so-called center-left, PASOK's coalition managed to retain around two-thirds of its power, a newly-formed party ("The River") achieved a remarkable record and the potential competitor (DIMAR) disappeared. The establishment of a centre-left social democratic alternative against the left-Eurosceptics should be assessed.

In the right wing of the spectrum (38.8%), New Democracy retains its dominant place, but the ultra-right Golden Dawn is a great danger for the party system in Greece as a potential player in the political competition.

The election of Rena Dourou as the Prefect of Attica showed that the "anti-Memorandum" block managed to elect its representative. However, when parliamentary elections are called, the parties will have to express their policies and proposals on governance. Until then the Greek party system should not legitimize, but rather isolate, those that jeopardize the prospects of the country.

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13| Ioannis Sotiropoulos

Syriza's exhausted momentum

It has been a long standing tradition in Greek politics for the European Parliamentary elections to be a political procedure whereby citizens safely convey a message to the government, usually disapproving it, without focusing on the actual essence of the said elections, i.e. that of evaluating and voting for a proposal for the European administration. Another well-established tradition is the highly politicized character of the regional elections, whose first round results simulated, to an extent, the national electoral power of all Greek political parties. While the latter pattern has been adhered to, insofar as the European Parliamentary elections are concerned the tradition has been loudly broken, completely in line with the overall climate across Europe, which, *inter alia*, reflects the radical increase of eurosceptic and extreme right political parties, along with the anti-austerity vote as a result of the EU's fiscal policy.

It thus appears that in these elections the Greek electorate behaved in a more conscious manner, delivering a clear message of opposition to European Commission-imposed austerity. Given its radical, anti-memorandum activity, one would expect that this popular discontent would favor Syriza, yet it has not managed to prevail in the political scene as it is lacking political and electoral dynamic. Even in absolute numbers and percentages it slightly lags behind its June 2012 performance. Contrary to the obvious dynamic that it had in those national elections, Syriza's momentum has been exhausted. This failure to rise is exacerbated given that the EP elections provide an opportunity for the expression of discontent without any consequences and are carried out amidst financial difficulties that have long exhausted society's tolerance. Syriza's stagnation becomes even clearer if we take into account the results of the first round of the regional elections (18 May), during which Syriza's endorsed candidates received approximately 17%, with New Democracy evidently leading with a national aggregate of 26%. On the other hand, in the EP elections the ND managed to persuade a significant part of the electoral audience of the need for political stability, which it evangelized along with PASOK, and suffered a manageable reduction to its electoral power. Similarly, PASOK, as the main party pillar of the newly founded political movement of Elia, has survived Syriza's pressure, losing approximately one-third of its share compared to 2012, maintaining the hope for a regrouping of social democratic central-left on a new basis.

In conclusion, despite the obvious condemnation of austerity, the major political conclusion is that Syriza has lost the role of a reliable alternative for a Greek government, at least in the short-run. The success of Syriza's candidate for prefect of Attica in the 2nd round of regional elections softens the blow. Finally, taking as granted the launch of a new European policy oriented towards growth and social prosperity with obvious elements of social/radical liberalism, the coalition of New Democracy-PASOK will be favored, particularly if the next national elections take place at the end of the four-year term, i.e. in 2016 when Greece's economic and social conditions are anticipated to have improved. However, a national election could be triggered in March 2015 following a deadlock in the process of electing the next President of the Republic. While such an election is to the actual benefit of neither of the two major political parties, it will probably be instigated by Syriza, which considers the said *momentum* as an opportunistic step towards power.

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14| Alexandra Prodromidou

The precarious state of Greek politics

The May 2014 elections have been viewed by both the coalition government parties and the opposition as a *de facto referendum* on the Greek people's willingness, or lack of it, to endure the continuing austerity measures. For New Democracy (ND) and PASOK the objective was to assess the political cost of their policies and to receive a clear mandate to continue with the reforms which they started two years ago. For Syriza the objective was to build on a *majority vote of no confidence* in the government in order to lead the country to early parliamentary elections in the coming months.

Following the trend in voting behavior which started in the 2012, the message from the Greek electorate has been much more complex and largely inconclusive. Thus, although Syriza accomplished a straightforward victory of 3.9% over ND at the European Parliament (EP) elections, this is still insufficient to legitimize a no-confidence motion against the government. Additionally while Syriza won the EP election, ND came first in the battle for regional authorities, indicating that, at least at present, the two parties co-exist in tandem, although SYRIZA is on the ascend while ND is declining.

It has been widely claimed that voting behaviour at the EP elections differs from that at the parliamentary elections, because of the common perception that the latter are of greater importance. Nonetheless, these elections have a certain analytical value. They are an interim assessment of the 2012 electoral results, when the demand for a coalition government brought together ND, PASOK and the Democratic Left (DIMAR) and gave them the mandate to negotiate the terms of the new bailout agreement, while keeping Greece inside the Eurozone. If general elections do not take place before early 2015, the election of the President of the Republic will be the next crash test for the coalition government at the national level.

The further destabilization of the party apparatus in south Europe is in full mode. In Greece we are witnessing the deterioration of the *Metapolitefsi* (post-1974) system and its aftershocks. The centre-left became further fragmented with PASOK joining the coalition of Elia and just about escaping its collapse while DIMAR is close to breaking up after leaving the coalition government and refusing to join Elia. Also we saw the creation of new parties, like To Potami, the slight rise of the Communist Party (KKE) at both the local and the EP elections, the fall in the percentages of the populist ANEL, the stabilization of the Golden Dawn as the third party despite the imprisonment of half of its members, and most importantly, the low turnout. By receiving more evenly balanced results throughout the Greek periphery (not just in major cities) and by appealing to a wider range of age groups, Syriza is consolidating its dominant position. Furthermore, DIMAR and To Potami, which tried to appeal to the pool of voters who thought of abstaining, were not able to convince them that they represent a viable 'third way'.

Hence the results capture the precarious state of Greek politics: the continuous transformation of Syriza from a fringe party into a party of power, in the process of consolidating its multiple fractions; the shrinking of the electoral base of ND; the fragmentation of the centre-left; the establishment of the Golden Dawn as the third power in Greek politics; and the rise in the numbers of the 'silent majority'. Any government needs to have a general consensus in order to enjoy a stable term in power and this will come from the people who abstain from voting. The current distribution of votes cannot produce a strong and stable government.

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15| Stylianos Tzagkarakis and Apostolos Kamekis

The electorate offers the government a bit more time

The two elections were of explicit importance for both the coalition government and the main opposition party in Greece and under specific circumstances could have triggered an immediate national election. Instead, the result did not reveal any clear public intention towards a radical change in the political system as it has been formed during the last two years. The conservative party (New Democracy), which is the main governmental partner, suffered reduced electoral rates in comparison with the results of the national elections of 2012. However, the gap between the two largest parties (New Democracy and radical left Syriza) as a percentage and as the absolute number of votes, does not allow us to come to the conclusion that the majority of the population trust Syriza's proposed programme.

The social democratic coalition (Elia – Olive Tree) which includes the other government partner (PASOK) shows a declining electoral influence compared with PASOK's share of the vote in 2012. However, the result may be considered positive as it was almost double than what was indicated by opinion polls during the last five months. But the declining electoral power of the social democrats during the last three years indicates that there is a demand for a change in the implemented austerity measures supported by PASOK.

Furthermore, although SYRIZA have won the politically important region of Attica and the region of the Ionian Islands in the regional elections, its candidates failed to win any of the other 11 regions or, indeed, the most significant municipalities. Additionally, the 3.87% lead from New Democracy does not justify even slightly a strong public will towards a change of the political scene. Instead, Greeks seem to have decided to offer the government more time, while giving them the message that austerity measures have created extensive social and economic problems and should be reduced. In contrast, Syriza does not appear as a convincing choice for the reversal of the situation, despite the lead in the European elections.

The worrying factor of these elections is the rise of the percentages of the neo-Nazi party (Golden Dawn), which, despite revelations about the illegal action of party members, has become an option of protest as well as ignorance for several citizens. It is clear that this is dangerous for the democracy in Greece as well as it being a consequence of the financial crisis. At the same time, the Democratic Left party (DIMAR) suffered a huge defeat in the European elections as citizens did not accept the unclear rhetoric of the party, as well as its decision not to cooperate with other center left political forces while a new party with unclear ideology (The River) collected several center left voters.

Hence, the message of these elections is twofold. Right-wing radicalism is gaining significant power as a sign of distrust of the political spectrum, while most of the Greek citizens do not support immediate national elections, a demand which was at the core of Syriza's campaign; on the contrary, they want to extend the political life of the government while expressing their disappointment for the severe consequences of austerity measures. A realistic way to regain trust and ensure political stability would be to implement policies that soften the consequences of the financial crisis for the middle and for lower socio-economic groups.

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16| Vasilis Leontitsis

Whither the Greek Greens?

Five years ago, the Greek Green party (or else the Ecologist Greens) had reasons to celebrate. Its electoral result in the 2009 European Elections had been rather modest (3.49%), but enough for it to secure its first MEP. Furthermore, this was the highest share of the votes ever recorded by a Green party in the electoral history of the country. Back then this was heralded as a breakthrough for the Ecologist Greens and the beginning of their establishment in mainstream politics. In the 2014 European Elections the mood couldn't have been any more different. The party not only failed to elect any MEPs, but it also lost most of its votes. The tide had turned.

There are many reasons behind this radical change in the party's fortunes. First of all, in 2009 the Green party received many protest votes, but this time round it did not manage to register as a credible candidate. In the last few years, a number of political parties have been created as a result of the financial crisis, the fragmentation of the political system, and the collapse in the share of the votes of the two major parties. Moreover, old parties have been able to rebrand themselves and capture the voters' attention. Hence, the Ecologist Greens faced staunch competition in their effort to attract protest votes and eventually failed.

Secondly, the party line has been vague all along. The plurality of the voices from within the party has been perceived as cacophony by the outsiders. It lacks a clear voice regarding its positions in crucial matters, such as its standing on the economy, its possible future collaboration with New Democracy and PASOK or SYRIZA, etc. Moreover, it has failed to persuade the Greek voters that it has a broader agenda that goes beyond environmental issues and thus prove its relevance in the current, turbulent times.

Thirdly, this crashing electoral defeat has followed three consecutive failures in national elections (October 2009, May 2012, June 2012) to clear the 3% threshold and elect members in the Greek Parliament. These defeats have eventually condemned the party to a place at the fringes of the Greek political landscape. The Green party has failed to become an important player and as a consequence it was broadly ignored in the recent elections.

Just to make things worse, in the run up to the elections, the party experienced detrimental internal struggles that led to the disillusionment of many of its members and voters. Key party leaders spent a lot of time and energy in trying to prevent each other from reaching power. In the end, just a few weeks before the elections, the party split into two: The "Ecologist Greens" and the "Greens – Solidarity, Creation, Ecology". Between them, they registered less than 1.5% of the votes in the recent European Elections; a far cry from the 2009 success.

In the early 1990s, the Green political movement managed to elect an MP for a short period of time, but soon quarrels and lack of internal cohesion led to the disappearance of this early Green coalition. For ten years the Green political forces failed to unite and create a viable political formation. In the 2000s, the Ecologist Greens promised to achieve the breakthrough earlier efforts had failed to materialise. This second attempt seems to be coming to an end and the latest European Elections results signify this. What remains is a pressing question regarding the Green political movement in the country: Will there be another chance in the future and is it going to be third time lucky?

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17| Manos Papazoglou

Quo vadis Graecia?

Greece is the only political system among the four states most severely hit by the economic crisis (the other three being Ireland, Portugal and Spain) which has been going through a political crisis, too. The symptoms of this crisis rest on substantial changes to the party system since 2012: short-lived governments and PMs, polarization, rise of extreme right activism accompanied with parliamentary seats, and record-low levels of trust in political institutions. How did recent elections on local and regional authorities and representatives to the European Parliament actually impact upon the political situation?

There is a mix of negative and positive effects. To start with, it seems that the party system now has two basic pillars, New Democracy (ND) and Syriza, along with a range of smaller parties on the left and right of the axis. Samaras' premiership concluded a period of very tense political and diplomatic developments. These election results give him the time to proceed with reforms that have to address the thorniest issues (unemployment, taxation, debt) and deliver sensible results. ND has to work hard on drafting a new government program that will set the priorities for the coming period of economic revival. Meanwhile, the party needs drastic changes in order to re-approach groups of voters who have distanced themselves from it.

Tsipras managed to stabilize Syriza's electoral base formed in the 2012 elections. However, for Syriza to become a viable governing party, many more changes should be made to the party's ideological profile, program and electoral strategy. Tsipras has the opportunity to strengthen his leadership by drawing on both his internal electoral success as well as on the experience he gained *qua* the candidate for President of the European Commission. He should not overlook the fact that other parties with left-to-center orientations hold a considerable share of the vote (Elia, Potami) and should be treated as potential competitors as well as possible partners. Even though governmental stability seems not to be threatened by the election results yet, other weaknesses of the political system are still present: Golden Dawn increased its share of the vote, while new entries (Potami) and declining older ones (Democratic Left) sustain the fragmentation of the party system.

Finally, with regard to the local authorities, which are seen as an important democratic layer, the quality of accountability and political programs has been generally poor. Regions and municipalities will have the opportunity to contribute to the country's return to prosperity, especially as their term coincides with the new period of EU funding (2014-2020). Therefore, the challenge for mayors and prefects is to show the capacity for strategic and effective leadership. Electoral campaigns across the country provide little evidence that this is possible.

To conclude, Greece may take two different directions. The first one is that of Ireland, Portugal and Spain, which, in spite of their own shortcomings, managed to safeguard a functional political system that does not inhibit the implementation of necessary changes. The second one is that of Italy in which once the political system collapsed in the 1990s, it never actually recovered, nor did it find antidotes to its main problems (government instability, frequent elections, continuous dramatic changes to the party system etc). I think the first road is the one on which Greece will be better-off and the one which it can take, provided parties and leaders act in a responsible manner.

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18| Panagiota Manoli

The three messages of the election

The results of the elections for the European Parliament representatives held in Greece on 25th May came as no surprise. The government coalition (New Democracy and Elia) together won 30,73% of the vote, but the anti-austerity party Syriza came first, winning the elections with 26,58%. This balanced result reflects a clear political demand of the Greek people: on the one hand, to move on with the reform of the state and its economy within the Eurozone and on the other hand, to radically rectify the nearly five years' old austerity policy designed by the Troika of lenders (IMF, EC and ECB). Both coalition partners suffered losses as a result of implementing the most unpopular measures of the last thirty years.

The main political message of the elections is that *the Greek electorate remains strongly pro-EU and pro-Euro*. No anti-EU voices are strong among the Greek electorate. Despite the steep decline in income and the record high unemployment rates, much of which has been attributed to the excruciating economic adjustment programme, the vast majority remain committed to the EU. The results of the elections either at the local or at the Euro-parliament level have thus *dismissed a myth*: that most Greeks attribute the economic collapse of their country to the EU. On the contrary, the results delivered a plain truth: the Greek electorate punished the parties which brought the country to collapse and have been unable to successfully implement required reforms (i.e. PASOK/Elia and ND). But, the electorate has at the same time prioritized political stability within Eurozone giving the current governmental coalition just enough democratic legitimization and power to continue with the much needed restructuring of the Greek economy. The votes towards other, pro-European parties such as DIMAR (Democratic Left), Potami (The River) and Gefyres (Bridges) point to the same direction.

The second reading of the 2014 elections is that *populism remains as strong as usual but not dominant, despite the crisis*. The placing of anti-austerity, populist Syriza as the first party by a margin of less than 4 points over ND should not be read as the triumph of leftist ideology. That leftist political ideology, either in its radical form of the Greek communist party (KKE), or in the center-left spectrum (i.e. DIMAR, Elia) was not rewarded. What Syriza's relative success indicates is that the populist ideology of resisting reforms is still a notable force but represents the old establishment rhetoric rather than bringing in a fresh political ethos. Syriza's share of the vote – the same as in 2012 - indicates that its anti-austerity rhetoric has not been able to attract a bigger part of the electorate. Nor does the success of To Potami, which appeared less than three months before the election, can be attributed to its political ideology, as the latter has not yet been formed. The electorate voted To Potami as a potential fresh and uncorrupted political party that may act as a balancing act in a future political system requiring coalition governments.

The third message of the Greek elections is that *extreme ultra-nationalist fascist Golden Dawn maintains a permanent support base* in the Greek electorate. Taking the third place in the European Parliament elections and after a strong performance in local elections, the extremists maintain almost 10% of the vote despite the investigation against and imprisonment of several party leaders. The electorate's behavior vis-à-vis GD sends worrying messages about a radical shift towards ultra-nationalism and extremism. This a trend marked throughout Europe, including in countries that have withered the crisis well or have not been seriously affected by it.

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19| Emmanuel Sigalas

Unsustainable polarisation in a fragmented system

The 2014 European elections in Greece bore few surprises this time and this is what makes them so interesting. As expected, Syriza came first, New Democracy (ND) second, the Golden Dawn (GD) third and a tail of smaller, though not insignificant, parties follows. What is so special about these elections is not so much the question 'who got what', but 'for how long'.

How long is the new multi-party system going to last before Greeks despair with its instability? Those who grew up in a country dominated by PASOK and ND must feel a bit at loss currently. PASOK struggles to survive electorally, and ND is but a shadow of its old self. This favours not only Syriza, but also the smaller parties which, however, seem to have a short life-span, contributing thus to the system's instability. The Democratic Left (DIMAR), founded in 2010, got 6.92% in the (June) 2012 elections and only 1.20% this time. Independent Greeks (ANEL), founded in 2012, fell from 7.51% in 2012 to 3.46%. LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally), founded in 2000, have failed to elect a single MP since 2009 and secured no seat in these elections.

As things stand right now it is impossible to predict what the future holds for the latest entrant, To Potami (The River) which was formed only three months before the elections and received 6.60% of the vote. Will it survive and grow, or will it meet the fate of its predecessors? Who remembers POLAN, DIKKI, or Fileleftheri Symmachia now?

Between 1974 and 2009 Greece's political system was bipartisan and its politics polarised and confrontational. Today Greek politics remain polarised and confrontational, despite the recent demise of the bipartisan system. How are we to explain this paradox? In the absence of an electoral system favouring coalition governments and consensual politics, Greek parties and politicians are victims of their own rationality. All parties, old and new, try to polarise the electorate, in order to secure gains at the expense of each other. This is unsustainable in the long-term. Either a new political culture based on consensus instead of confrontation has to emerge, or the electorate will lose patience, faith and hope.

Without the right institutional incentives (an electoral and parliamentary system encouraging cooperation), parties are unlikely to commit to a paradigm shift in their political behaviour. The change of the constitution and of the electoral system, however, presuppose cross-party consensus. As a result, political polarisation is likely to intensify in the near future, while at the same time the electorate becomes increasingly agitated. Electoral behaviour, therefore, may become erratic if a 'messiah', a charismatic leader uniting larger sections of voters, fails to emerge soon.

With severe and persisting economic problems and with an obstinate neo-Nazi party this is a risky strategy Greece cannot afford. It is high time the political institutions were redesigned to bring polarisation where it belongs: to the past.

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Witnessing the return of politics

Firstly, it is quite impractical to try to group the local and regional election results, since voters deploy individualized criteria, revealing moral obligation, personal beliefs, aspirations etc. In this context, it is also difficult to interpret the result and encode it in a plain political message. As a general observation though, it is obvious that the old political system is still holding its influence and grassroots at the local and regional level, although it is losing power in the upper levels of political confrontation.

Conversely, emerging forces, meaning mainly Syriza, which won the European Parliament (EP) election, find it difficult to penetrate into the bases of society, though not impossible as Syriza succeeded in winning a few significant regions, such as Attica (which includes the metropolitan area of Athens) and the Ionian Islands.

Secondly, the outcome of the EP elections is not so much of a clear message directed to Europe, but rather the expression of a more complex demand to reform domestic political structures and re-determine Greek policies and politics. Polarization and fragmentation simultaneously reveal in a way this “agony” and “untidy coordination” of the Greek political system to overcome frustration caused by the crisis and the sudden retreat of the social state; and to move as safely as possible into a new era. In this way, not only political alignments, but also political *behaviors* are changing.

On the one hand, the electorate seems unwilling to appear as gullible or unaware as in the past, as this is a luxury that the country cannot afford. On the other hand, desperation and distrust towards old representations make a share of the electorate willing to give in either to untried and promising alternatives, or to extremism. This marks a new era for Greek politics. Syriza came first in the share of votes for the first time in the history of the Greek left, but other winners emerged, too, and the two governing parties are not between them. One of those winners proclaims pragmatism and represents a new kind of a political proposal rejecting explicit ideology (The River – To Potami), while the other, deploys criminal methods to rekindle fascist and Nazi ideas (Golden Dawn).

Thirdly, the call set by all parties for the Greek voters has been profoundly political. The stakes were high and for the first time since the 1990s the elections were not merely about the economy, special benefits for some groups or the continuation or annulment of a specific austerity or other stabilization programme.

The parties' call as well as the electoral outcome had to do with the meaning and values of socio-economic welfare, alternative options on a public policy paradigm and an overall ideological positioning towards the left or the right. In that sense, politics is coming to the fore and the economy is retreating, and that has made these elections particularly unique in the recent crisis-ridden history of Greece.

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21| Giorgos Katsambekis

Building a counter-hegemony

Sunday, May 25th, was definitely another landmark in Greece's modern political history; another episode in the massive realignment of its political system that is still underway. It was the day that for the first time in its democratic history a political party of the radical left came first at a national poll. Syriza, the political party that emerged two years ago from the margins of the political system to become a legitimate contender for political power and a major inspiration for leftists throughout Europe, managed to surpass the governing party, New Democracy (ND), by 3.9%. The two coalition parties lost around one-third of their support.

However, this is in no way a sign that the Greek society is 'leaning to the left'. A significant part of the electorate (around 9.5%) chose to vote for the extremist neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, at a time in which its leader (along with several of its MPs) is in jail, prosecuted as the head of a criminal organization, and the extremist and openly violent character of the party is widely acknowledged. What is more, LAOS received nearly 3% of the voters, bringing back from the dead the extreme right-wing xenophobic party that had collapsed in the 2012 elections, after participating in an EU-backed government coalition with ND and PASOK back in 2011. In this context, Greece occupies now a peculiar place within the European landscape. While in many countries of Europe one sees an unprecedented rise of the extreme-right – with France being here the most emblematic case – Greece sees a party of the radical left leading the polls. But this is counter-balanced by the fact that the same country gives rise to the most extreme and violent neo-Nazi party throughout the continent; a party whose members are already prosecuted or convicted for crimes with racist incentive. How can we start to move around this political puzzle?

It seems safe to assume that the anti-status quo sentiments of a significant part of the Greek society, which were brewed by the crisis, are still very active and likely to guide their political choices. The fact that the country, after the harshest austerity programme of its modern democratic history, has seen no sign of actual improvement (the debt is still rising, unemployment is soaring at approximately 28%) is leading voters further apart from the parties that governed during those years and are identified with the failing austerity programmes. The only coherent narrative that combines a passionate rejection of the status quo with a strong demand for a fairer redistribution of wealth and power, purporting to return power to 'the people', is that of the left. And this is one of the main reasons why the left is gaining ground: because it is probably the only political party that patiently (and, certainly, not without contradictions and setbacks) has been trying to build a *counter-hegemony*; an alternative to the mainstream.

The results seem also to vindicate Mouffe's claim that the only effective way to deal with the extreme-right parties in today's Europe is through the cultivation of a left-wing populism that will claim 'the people' back from its xenophobic and anti-immigrant appropriations, channelling their grievances towards the radicalization – not the rejection – of democracy. This may also be the case in Spain, where we have seen the impressive rise of a novel party of the left (Podemos) born out of the movement of the *indignados*. For now, of course, this is just a hypothesis that we have to work upon. The transitional phase that Europe has entered still holds much in store.

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22| Kostas Theologou

A promise of trust

Syriza sent a 'hard' political request to the electorate, which was reluctant to respond in a generous way. The citizens granted Syriza with their *promise* of trust, which, in other words, signals their *hope* that this first position for the Greek left in the European Parliament elections may force the government coalition to consider a serious relief of the devastated Greeks from their unjust and irrational taxation and oppressive burdens. However, a reshuffle of the cabinet is a superficial move if not accompanied with a brave institutional reform. Syriza clearly won the elections, but not to the extent that that win could be taken as a massive popular authorization of a new era of governance.

Still, this rearrangement in the political parties' order triggers personal discussions on a larger scale between centrist constituents; they merely want to impress the citizens and convince their supporters –whether they did vote for them or not- that pressure will be decreasing, their relief and recovery is *ante portas!* Who doesn't realize the strictly utilitarian motive of such a purely communicative handling of their audience?

Rena Dourou, on the other hand, as a Syriza candidate, managed to win the major region of Greece (36% of the country's total population), because she inspired people with a frank and straightforward *promesse du bonheur!* The new prefect of Attica, as a graduate teacher, gives a valuable political communication and design lesson to Syriza's leadership: the message has to be clearer, radical perhaps, but crystal!

Syriza was granted a promise of trust and this must be transformed into an authorized mandate on the national elections, very likely soon to come. Greece's European left-wing party has to clarify the political standpoint, the social promise for the restoration of democracy in everyday life, the humanist hope, and the rigidity of the change. People are ready to trust Syriza, but who doesn't realize that Syriza's aspiration is still kind of fuzzy? That's why the opponents interrogate its representatives with questions concerning their *practical* moves and *realist* choices, their *potential political allies*; this is crucial as bipolarity is demolished and coalitions seem like the inevitable governmental structures. Yet, Syriza's solid electoral support of 27% reaffirms citizens' trust despite its ambivalent formulations on the political prospects and aspirations of the day after. It should be taken into account that Syriza's share in a national election would have granted it with 130 (out of 300) seats.

Hence, Syriza needs to (a) clarify its stance on the *practicalities* of the social and financial relief from the unbearable load on the Greek people, and (b) opt for a *patriotic* policy on national issues (e.g. Turkey, Skopje/Macedonia). The former is easier, but the latter ignites stormy disputes and boisterous contention among its party leaders and members. Yet, that constitutes a one-way change in Syriza's policy in order to gain a majority in the northern part of the country, where New Democracy still prevails due to its nationalist discourse.

The left wing party need not necessarily adopt a nationalist rhetoric; a *mere expression* of patriotism would do. Who doesn't realize that under such a strategy Syriza might soon be given a mandate with no need for government allies?

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23| Sofia Vasilopoulou and Daphne Halikiopoulou

Golden Dawn now has a stable support base

Radical right-wing parties have emerged as the main winners of the 2014 European Parliament elections. UKIP beat both its Labour and Conservative rivals with 27.5 percent of the vote translating into 23 MEPs. In France, the Front National topped the polls with 25 percent and 25 MEPs. Radical right-wing parties came third in Austria, Hungary and Greece where the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn emerging as the third party with just over 9 percent according to latest estimates.

The Greek case is particularly interesting. Unlike in most cases where radical right-wing parties have sought to disassociate themselves from blatant extremism, not only is the Golden Dawn openly violent and racist but more importantly many of its MPs, including its leader, are currently in prison awaiting trial for charges including running a criminal organization, murder and grievous bodily harm. How can a party whose members are facing criminal records to this extent have been so attractive to large numbers of Greek voters?

This debate has been ongoing in Greece since the murder of left-wing activist Pavlos Fyssas and the charges pressed against Golden Dawn MPs. Many have had their parliamentary immunity lifted. Yet recently the Greek Supreme Court ruled that pending indictment, the Golden Dawn remains legal and may run for elections.

On the one hand, EP elections are 'second order' meaning that there is higher likelihood of protest vote since people may send a message of disillusionment and dissatisfaction to their government without necessarily giving a mandate for anti-establishment parties in the national parliament.

On the other hand, the implication of this result for national politics is paramount. First, the rise of anti-establishment parties in Greece signals a vote of no confidence and may speed up the process of a national election; and second the percentage received by the Golden Dawn is consistent with the May and June 2012 national election results and recent polls indicating that the Golden Dawn has managed to form a strong support base, ranging between 7 and 10 percent. This can also be seen in the results for the recent local elections in Greece where although Syriza (the radical left-wing party that topped the EU elections polls) did not perform as well as it did in the EU election, Golden Dawn support was consistent.

The answer lies in the ability of the Golden Dawn to blend nationalism with populism. By presenting Europe as a problem of national exploitation, it has managed to turn the question of indictment on its head. The key issue the party draws on is national sovereignty. Greek nationalism provides fertile ground for the Golden Dawn to draw on. The party draws parallels with Greece's historical battles for the restoration of national sovereignty, for instance against the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and Nazi Germany in the 1940s.

The rhetoric is one that emphasizes the distinction between superior and inferior nations, the strong sense of Greek ethnic superiority and the portrayal of the Greek nation under threat, which far from being an alien discourse, forms the dominant narrative of Greek nationalism constantly maintained and reproduced through official institutions including the education system.

Appealing to those who consider themselves patriots, and have been let down by the political mainstream, the Golden Dawn presents a story in which the Greek predicament is a result of those foreign exploitative powers who seek to destroy Greece, and their domestic collaborators. The attempt to indict the party members is merely another example of this, an

attempt by the 'old rotten system' to preserve the status quo by eradicating those who seek to restore true patriotic democracy.

The resonance of his story is what has gained the Golden Dawn a stable electoral base. Many of its supporters may not believe that it is a neo-Nazi or neo-fascist party. This is why perhaps unlike the other radical right-wing parties in Europe the Golden Dawn has managed to attract voters from across the party system. While the male, unskilled voters with low education opt for the party, support also derives from women, people of all ages, people of all educational backgrounds and those residing in more affluent constituencies.

It is clear that in Greece it is not absolute deprivation but expectation of deprivation, a deprivation caused by 'the enemies of Greece' is what drives Golden Dawn's support. Despite the second order character of these elections, this may prove a destabilizing longer-term trend.

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<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2014/05/27/golden-dawns-success-in-the-european-elections-shows-the-party-now-has-a-stable-support-base-among-greek-voters/>

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24| Constantine Boussalis

Wake up, Golden Dawn is here to stay

The numbers are shocking and irrefutable: 536,442 Greeks cast their ballots in favor of the Golden Dawn (GD) in last week's European Parliament elections, placing a neo-Nazi party third in the polls. Even more disconcerting, the electoral performance of this once obscure fringe group is trending strongly upward, having gained over 25 percent more votes since the national elections of June 2012.

The gains enjoyed by the Golden Dawn come after a series of apparent setbacks. Following the highly publicized murder of an anti-fascist rapper by a GD member in September 2013, a government crackdown ensued, leading to the arrest of its leader and other party members on organized crime charges. The parliamentary immunity of many of its MPs has been revoked. State funding of the party has been frozen. Mainstream media coverage has shifted from half-hearted toleration to outright condemnation. The Greek public has seen images of party members wielding weapons, beating immigrants and political opponents, sporting Nazi symbols, and performing rituals reminiscent of the darkest chapters of European history. A cascade of analyses describing, in detail, the illicit activities of the party has emerged in the press. Party members have been effectively shut out from live appearances on most television programs.

And yet, despite all this resistance, the Golden Dawn has somehow emerged victorious, while promising even more violence and upheaval.

In part, this success can be attributed to a long-term strategy which seeks out the most vulnerable segments of the population for support. Ilias Panagiotaros, a high-ranking party member, spelled it out very simply: "Golden Dawn wants to become, and will become, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is in effect a second government that helps even the last of its poor citizens". Greek-only blood banks and food rallies are now a fairly common sight. When the newly re-elected mayor of Athens, Giorgos Kaminis, took the courageous initiative to prohibit these public spectacles of hate, he was physically attacked by Golden Dawn supporters and elected officials.

However, the sad truth is that support for the Golden Dawn can be found across the socioeconomic spectrum. Unfortunately, central themes of the Golden Dawn discourse such as xenophobia, antisemitism, and jingoism resonate across much of Greek society. Most troubling is the emerging realpolitik handling of Golden Dawn by major political parties. Recently revealed secret communications between ex-cabinet secretary Panayiotis Baltakos and top Golden Dawn lieutenant Ilias Kasidiaris, show Baltakos questioning the independence of the prosecutors involved with the crackdown. Recent rationalizations by political leaders, such as Alexis Tsipras of SYRIZA, that supporters of Golden Dawn are not fascists, but rather are "deluded", is wishful thinking at best and political opportunism at worst.

Such political games must end. If the specter of fascism is to be snubbed out, its deeper societal determinants must be challenged head-on by all those who declare themselves supporters of democracy. There can be no compromise on this point.

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25| Symeon Andronidis

The (successful) ideology of hate and racism

The European Parliament elections in Greece (25 May 2014) have crystallized a new social, political and electoral map. This article focuses on neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, which got 9.40% of the vote. Given that in the 2012 parliamentary elections it received 6.97% (May) and 6.92% (June), this result shows the Golden Dawn's increasing electoral and social influence, despite the murder of young anti-fascist musician Pavlos Fyssas by GD member George Roupakias on 17 September 2013 in Keratsini.

The murder was followed by a judicial unraveling of the neo-Nazi apparatus. Key members of the party such as leader Nikolaos (Nikos) Michaloliakos were led to prison. Yet, despite the murder of both Pavlos Fyssas and Pakistani immigrant Sahzat Lukman in Athens, the Golden Dawn has demonstrated a social, political and electoral durability.

Following these elections, GD is considered the third political force in Greece, something unprecedented in postwar Europe. A part of the petty bourgeoisie believes that the arrival of immigrants in the country has been responsible for the high rate of unemployment and the deep financial crisis. They express their support to a party that openly praises Hitler and Nazism; the ideology of the Golden Dawn is the ideology of hate and racism.

The financial crisis in Greece has deconstructed the social fabric. The austerity measures, such as the reduction of wages and pensions and the gradual degradation of the welfare state created fertile ground for the gradual emergence of racism and the targeting of immigrants. Also, in recent years the two political parties that used to dominate the political system (New Democracy (ND) and PASOK) incorporated the right-wing agenda and embraced anti-immigrant attitudes.

At a time of deep economic crisis, a process of structural transformation of the Greek right-wing has occurred: from the right-wing LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally) to the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn. It is a crucial symptom of deep economic crisis also prevalent in Europe, where the various manifestations of the extreme right are gaining ground (e.g. Front National in France, UKIP in the United Kingdom).

The anti-fascist movement in Greece must fight against the Golden Dawn. In this case, the role of left-wing political parties is very important, especially the role of Syriza, which topped the European Parliament elections with 26.58% of the vote, marking the change of the political scene in Greece.

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26| Ilia Xypolia

Ode to Fear

By analysing the Greek results of the European Parliament elections we can make three observations: on the winning party at the ballot box; on the remarkable performance given its previous records; and on the trends for the future that we have to seriously take into account. The nominal winner was the party of the radical left, Syriza. However, in the midst of painful austerity measures Syriza did not manage to increase its votes in absolute numbers; on the contrary, it has lost over a hundred thousand votes comparing to the last election (**see Appendix**). The party therefore failed to make the highly anticipated breakthrough. So although the support for the radical left has remained strong and held its ground it did not make enough progress, failing to fully take advantage of the opportunities that the economic and political crisis has offered.

The second interesting and certainly most horrifying observation is that the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn is consistently increasing its support. For the voters that trusted the party two years ago there is no more the excuse that they have been misled as the political and ideological identity of the party is not obscured anymore. The founder and other leading members of the party are imprisoned awaiting trial on charges of running a criminal organisation. Many were deceived to believe that the growth of the fascist party could effectively be dealt with only judicially, being unable to fully grasp its dynamics. Many commentators undermined the phenomenon arguing that it will never be sustained as the 2012 electoral gains have to be considered as a punishment vote against the mainstream political parties. Still, more than a hundred thousand new voters were added to the electoral support that now exceeds half a million. The far-right party of LAOS is also reclaiming its previous percentages coming very close to succeed in electing an MEP while the support for populist right-wing party of Independent Greeks (ANEL) fell sharply.

The third pattern, which can be observed across Europe, is the rise of populist euroscepticism. The economic crisis has a significant impact on the political legitimacy of the EU, undermining public support for the Union. All across Europe, right-wing extremist groups are recruiting new voters by exploiting fears about the economy, putting the blame solely on immigrants. The European ballot box has been traditionally considered as a 'second-order national election' and thus attracted so-called "loose" and protest votes. Due to the fact that the mainstream parties could not put forward a convincing and clear proposal on the resolution of the crisis, the appeal of a populist extremist reasoning is gaining momentum. The European citizens consider the painful austerity measures as a Sisyphean task that consistently leads to the destruction of the social fabric. This provides a fertile ground for popular unrest, rise of extremism and the appeal of populism. The big challenge for the European leaders is not only to manage the declining global power of Europe and to fix the faulty remedy to the economic crisis, but also to proactively develop a strategy to counterattack populist and xenophobic concerns. The scapegoating of the immigrants can only be dealt by bursting populist and xenophobic myths on immigration and its links to the destruction of the European economies.

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Appendix | Election results 2009-2014

Political Party (Political Group in the European Parliament)	European Elections June 2009	Parliamentary Elections October 2009	Parliamentary Elections May 2012	Parliamentary Elections June 2012	European Elections May 2014	Difference between June 2012 and May 2014
Turnout	5,261,749 52.54%	7,044,606 70.95%	6,476,818 65.12%	6,216,798 62.49%	5,706,355 59.96%	-510,443
Syriza (GUE/NGL)	240,971 4.40%	517,249 7.54%	1,061,928 16.79%	1,655,022 26.89%	1,516,634 26.58%	-138,388
New Democracy (EPP)	1,656,085 32.30%	2,295,719 33.47%	1,192,103 18.85%	1,825,497 29.66%	1,295,967 22.71%	-529,530
Golden Dawn (NA)	23,609 0.46%	19,624 0.29%	440,966 6.97%	426,025 6.92%	536,409 9.40%	110,384
Pasok / Elia (S&D)	1,879,229 36.65%	3,012,542 43.92%	833,452 13.18%	756,024 12.28%	457,573 8.02%	-298,451
To Potami (S&D)	NA	NA	NA	NA	376,629 6.60%	NA
KKE (GUE/NGL)	428,151 8.25%	517,249 7.54%	536,105 8.48%	277,227 4.50%	376,629 6.09%	99,402
Independent Greeks (NA)	NA	NA	671,324 10.62%	462,406 7.51%	197,536 3.46%	-264,870
LAOS (MELD)	366,616 7.15%	386,205 5.63%	182,925 2.89%	97,099 1.58%	153,920 2.70%	-56,821
Democratic Left (S&D)	NA	NA	386,394 6.11%	384,986 6.25%	68,695 1.20%	-316,291
Ecologists- Greens (EGP)	178,960 3.49%	173,589 2.53%	185,485 2.93%	54,408 0.88%	51,573 0.90%	-2,835

Source: Greek Ministry of the Interior, <http://ekloges.ypes.gr>