

A view from...

Denmark

News from FTI Consulting's European affiliate network

May 2019: Geelmuyden Kiese (GK) is part of FTI Consulting's affiliate network and is Scandinavia's largest communications agency. GK helps its customers manage change, communicate business plans, digital marketing, design, advertising, public affairs and public relations - telling their clients stories efficiently, both internally and externally. Below the team provides an update ahead of the forthcoming **EU elections** scheduled for 26th May.

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EU Elections Analysis - Denmark

Executive summary

- The polls strongly suggest that the winners of the Danish European Parliament (EP) election will be the traditional mainstream pro-EU parties.
- According to the polls, the populist EU-sceptical party, The Danish People's Party, will lose half of its support moving from four to two seats in parliament.
- A general election for the Danish Parliament has been called for 5 June 2019. According to the polls, the present right-wing government will be replaced by a Social Democratic one-party minority government. If so, the next prime minister will be the chairman of The Social Democratic Party, Mette Frederiksen.
- A change in government will not change Denmark's position in or approach to the EU.
- It unlikely that a Social Democratic government will reappoint the present Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, who was appointed by the former Social Democratic-led coalition government.
- So far, the key political issues in the EP-campaign has been climate, taxation and immigration.

A likely win for the mainstream parties

The upcoming Danish EP election will take place on Sunday 26 May 2019. At the moment the polls indicate that the winners of the election will be the traditional mainstream pro-EU parties with the two largest parties, The Social Democratic Party and The Liberal Party, in front.

The populist EU-sceptical party, The Danish People's Party, became the largest party at the last EP-election in 2014. According to the polls, The Danish People's Party is expected to lose half of its support and be reduced from four to two seats. This downturn in support for the party is also evident in domestic politics.

Two campaigns at the same time

On 7 May the Danish Prime Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, announced the next general election for parliament. The general election will be held on the Danish Constitution Day, 5 June (Wednesday).

According to the polls the present right-wing minority coalition government will be replaced by a Social Democratic one-party minority government. If so, the next Prime Minister will be the chairman of The Social Democratic Party, Mette Frederiksen.

A change in government will not change Denmark's position in or approach to the EU. It is unlikely that a Social Democratic government will reappoint the present Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, who was appointed by the former Social Democratic-led coalition government.

The parliamentary election in June entails that there are two nationwide political campaigns taking place in Denmark at the moment. This is very unusual situation and it is unclear how this situation will impact the support for the different parties and the total voter turnout, which is relatively low for EP elections, historically. Usually, an EP election in Denmark results in a voter turnout at around 55 pct. The normal turnout for a parliamentary election is around 85 pct.

Media focus on the parliamentary election

The campaign for the Danish parliamentary election takes up the vast majority of the political coverage in the media as this is the election the Danes care the most about. As a result, there has only been one major national televised EP debate, so far. The debate took place on Danish Broadcasting Cooperation's *DR1* on 27 April. The second national television broadcaster, TV 2, has announced that it will not air EP debates on its main channel but only on its smaller 24-hour news channel, TV 2-News.

Climate, tax and immigration

So far, the key political issues in the EP campaign has been climate, taxation and immigration. Recent polls indicate, that these are also the EU issues that are most important to the Danish electorate.

Climate

Besides The Danish People's Party, there is a general consensus among almost all the parties running in the EP election that the EU is key in solving the climate crises. Parties agree that the best way to reach the European CO2 reduction goals are by close cooperation on a European level. As such, the major debate topics are not whether or not Denmark should have an ambitious goal to reduce CO2 emissions. Instead, topics circle around how detailed the regulation should be in defining the reductions goals over the coming years and how progressive the EU should be on climate.

Taxation

In regard to taxation, major issues include whether the EU should be allowed to tax tech giants on a European level and if there should be a common bottom limit on corporate taxes across member states. Typically, parties on the left are the most positive towards European taxation schemes and bottom limits on taxation. However, during the campaign The Liberal Party has changed its position and now support a bottom limit on corporate taxes. With the Liberal Party's new position, there is currently a majority among the Danish MEP's supporting a bottom limit for corporate taxes.

Immigration

In regard to immigration, a majority of the parties support tight border control at the EU's external borders to prevent refugees and immigrants getting in. As such, the main debate issue is primarily whether the EU should follow a policy that distributes refugees and immigrants more evenly among member states, and to what extent the EU should focus on stopping the flow of immigrants and refugees by way of foreign aid in the immigrants' home countries.

The polls

At the moment Denmark has 13 members in the European Parliament. When (if) the UK leaves the EU, Denmark will get an extra MEP and have 14 in total.

Generally, Danish polls leading up to an election for the European Parliament are rather imprecise. The electorate does not follow EU politics closely and there is a tendency that the national support levels influence the results. As such, EP polls should be viewed with considerable caution.

According to the latest weighted polls the parties running for the current EP election have the following backing:

The Social Democratic Party

Currently has 3 seats – is expected to secure approx. 4 seats

The Danish People's Party

Currently has 4 seats – is expected to secure approx. 2 seats

The Liberal Party

Currently has 2 seats – is expected to secure approx. 4 seats

The Conservative People's Party

Currently has 1 seat – is expected to secure approx. 0/1 seat

The Socialist People's Party

Currently has 1 seat – is expected to secure approx. 1 seat

The Social Liberal Party

Currently has 1 seat – is expected to secure approx. 1 seat

The Liberal Alliance Party

Currently has 0 seats – is expected to secure approx. 0 seat

The Red/Green Alliance

Currently has 0 seats – is expected to secure approx. 1 seat

The People's Movement Against EU

Currently has 1 seat – is expected to secure approx. 1 seat

The Alternative Party

Currently has 0 seats – is expected to secure approx. 0 seat

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