



2024 Global elections & climate trends monitor

3 July 2024

Greetings,

This month all eyes were on France and the UK, with national elections coming up in both countries that promise to significantly shape the global political status quo.

In France, the far-right National Rally, led by Jordan Bardella, emerged victorious in the first round of the snap legislative elections on 30th June. The second round, coming up on 7th July, will determine the final composition of the National Assembly and could lead to substantial shifts in France's approach to climate and environmental policies.

Across the Channel, the UK general election is set for 4th July, which looks likely to signal the end of the Conservative Party's leadership. The outcome of the election will be a crucial indicator of whether the UK is likely to step up its climate ambition.

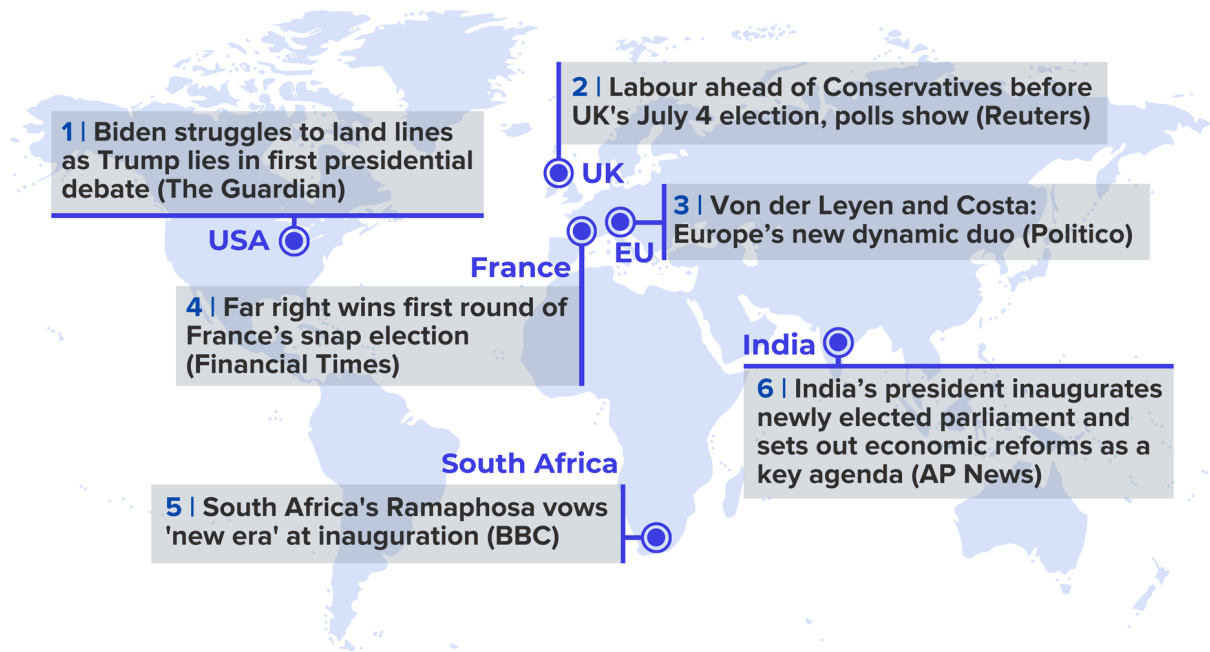
Join us as we delve into how climate change is transforming political narratives. Feel free to share this newsletter with your contacts, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Until next time,

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This month's key developments



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Climate politics

- [Global survey reveals 'truly astonishing' consensus for stronger climate action](#) (UN News)
"The overwhelming majority of people around the world want an end to geopolitical differences when it comes to fighting climate change, the results of a landmark public opinion poll conducted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has shown."
- [A second Trump term could slow the shift from fossil fuels as climate threats grow](#) (NPR)
"When Donald Trump held a town hall recently in Phoenix, 11 people were treated for heat exhaustion amid record 113-degree temperatures. Some lay on stretchers, hooked to IV bags. That didn't stop Trump from railing as he often does against wind turbines and electric vehicles."
- [Climate action back in EU's policy priorities for the next term – leak](#) (Euronews)
"Idea of scrapping green priorities unveiled in a previous leak unleashed backlash from environmentalists and lawmakers but a new leak on the Strategic Agenda reveals EU leaders' intention to continue pushing for EU climate action."
- [Historic Nature Law Passes In Europe: Now We Need To Finance It](#) (Forbes)
"Campaigners exploded with joy when EU ministers finally agreed to pass the controversial 'Nature Restoration Law' this month."
- [US pledges to be a climate finance leader but defends gas expansion](#) (The Guardian)
"The US will 'continue to be a leader' in climate finance, the White House's top climate official has promised, though without specifying how much it would provide to poor countries."

Climate impacts

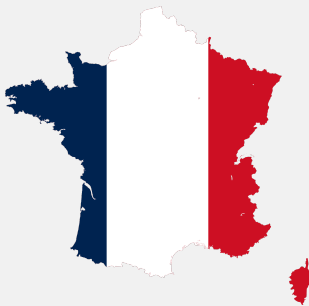
- [National security experts warn that extreme weather threatens elections this year](#) (NPR)
"Billions of people around the world are expected to vote in elections this year. And some national security professionals warn that there's a growing threat to these elections — one on par with disinformation, foreign interference and even the threat of political violence."
- [Delhi suffers extreme weather whiplash as heat waves give way to record rain and deadly flash floods](#) (CNN)
"Deadly flash flooding due to sudden heavy rains has inundated India's capital, replacing one of the

worst heat waves in Delhi's history that sent temperatures soaring well above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit)."

- [Extreme heat in India has killed more than 100 people in the past three and a half months](#) (AP News)
"A monthslong heat wave across swathes of India has killed more than 100 people and led to over 40,000 suspected cases of heat stroke in the past three and a half months, according to data from India's Health Ministry."
- [Rising sea levels will disrupt millions of Americans' lives by 2050](#) (The Guardian)
"Floods could leave coastal communities in states like Florida and California unlivable in two decades."
- [Climate change made US and Mexico heatwave 35 times more likely](#) (BBC)
"Human-induced climate change made recent extreme heat in the US south-west, Mexico and Central America around 35 times more likely, scientists say."

Country spotlight: France

Second round of elections: 7 July 2024



Country stats

- Political stability (2022): [0.3](#)
- Free elections score (2023): [0.95](#)
- Happy Planet Index (2021): [52](#)
- Envi Performance Index (2022): [67.1](#)
- Net zero target: [In law](#), net zero by 2050
- RE capacity (2023): [122.3 GW](#)
- CO2 emissions (2020): [4 tonnes p/capita](#)

Top climate and election stories

- [France's opportunity to be a global leader on climate action at risk](#) (France24)
"The current frontrunner, the National Rally Party has historically mocked or downplayed environmental issues, while Macron's party wants to continue the gains it's made, and the new left-alliance The Popular Front is looking to be more proactive."
- [Climate change: French scientists concerned about a far-right election victory](#) (France24)
"As France's snap election campaign is in full swing, activists and scientists have raised their concerns about what a far-right National Rally victory could mean for the country's climate and environment policy."
- [Where does the French left stand on immigration, Ukraine and climate policy?](#) (Euronews)
"France's left-wing parties struggled to find common ground ahead of the European elections but have struck an alliance for the snap legislative elections."

Regional analysis

The first round of France's parliamentary elections ended with a [clear lead for the far-right National Rally](#) (NR, or Rassemblement National/RN in French), which got just over 33% of the votes, followed by the New Popular Front (Nouveau Front Populaire), the united group of left-wing parties, which got just under 28%. President Emmanuel Macron's party, Ensemble, scooped just under 21%. At this stage it is very difficult to make projections for the second round, but it looks like a NR relative majority is more or less unavoidable. An overall majority will be more difficult to obtain, but members of the traditional French conservative party, The Republicans (Les Républicains), may be tempted to collaborate with the NR.

In polls, [climate usually ranks between the 3rd and 5th concern of the French public](#). Purchasing power, on the other hand, usually tops the rankings. The party lacks ambition on climate and [denounces what it calls "ecologie punitive"](#) – 'punishing' constraints on citizens for environmental

benefit. It is important to remember that the 2018 Yellow Vest (Gilet Jaunes) protests were triggered by a rise in carbon tax. The NR instead proposes “ecologie de bons sens”, or ‘good-sense ecology’, meaning, essentially, unambitious policies to avoid bothering voters. ‘Localism’ (buying and selling local) is its other answer for the environment, and the party sides with farmers in disputes.

Energy-wise, the NR is a staunch supporter of nuclear power and wants to build new reactors, and is an equally staunch opponent of renewables. Jordan Bardella, president of the NR, [recently announced](#) that the party wants a moratorium on new wind developments, although the nuclear plans proposed by the NR are unrealistic in terms of scope and cost.

The party has previously indicated that it will leave the European Power Market and is against a 2035 ICE phase out, but, on the verge of seizing power, is adapting (or retracting) proposals to make its manifesto more realistic. This is all the more important as France has just been [downgraded by Standard & Poors \(to AA-\), with a deficit of 5.5% of GDP](#) (vs. the 3% European rule) and debt ballooning at 110% of GDP. As Europe’s main power exporter, access to the European power market is crucial for France. Bardella said recently he is [no longer intending to leave the European Power Market](#) and instead will ask for adaptations for the French market, which will likely be a hard sell. Pushing back the 2035 ICE ban could also be challenging, as French automakers Renault and Stellantis support it.

One thing the NR stays firm in is its willingness to lower VAT on energy. The party [proposes to lower VAT on fuels and power from 20% to 5.5%](#). This would cost somewhere in the region of EUR 17 Billion per year (more than 10% of the 2023 deficit) and would also benefit the wealthy

For an in-depth look, check CarbonBrief’s: [France election 2024: What the manifestos say on energy and climate](#)

Country spotlight: **United Kingdom**

Polling day: **4 July 2024**



Country stats

- Political stability (2022): [0.5](#)
- Free elections score (2023): [0.93](#)
- Happy Planet Index (2021): [49.5](#)
- Envi Performance Index (2022): [72.7](#)
- Net zero target: [In law](#), net zero by 2050
- RE capacity (2022): [122.1 GW](#)
- CO2 emissions 2020): [4.6 tonnes p/capita](#)

Top climate and election stories

- [‘If we win, we will seize the moment’: Labour vows to fill climate action ‘leadership vacuum’ \(Business Green\)](#)
“Ed Miliband urges voters to back ambitious plans to deliver a step change in the UK’s decarbonisation efforts.”
- [UK Election: Green Party Will Push Labour On Climate Says Co-Leader \(Bloomberg\)](#)
“Green Party of England and Wales Co-Leader Adrian Ramsay told Bloomberg Tv’s Guy Johnson that Green MP’s could push a Labour government to “be bolder” on climate action and funding for public services”
- [In Aberdeen, climate and energy take centre stage in UK election \(France24\)](#)
“In Europe’s oil and gas “capital”, Aberdeen, voters are apprehensive about Labour’s plans for

combatting climate change if the opposition party wins next month's UK general election as expected."

- [**Racist and Homophobic Comments Unsettle U.K. Election Campaign**](#) (The New York Times)
"Prime Minister Rishi Sunak denounced a slur used against him by a man campaigning for Reform U.K., the anti-immigration party led by Nigel Farage."

Regional analysis

[Polls of UK voters](#) currently suggest that Labour is in a position to win a comfortable victory in the upcoming elections, potentially ending 14 years of Conservative rule.

Public opinion polls currently rate climate at around the fourth or [fifth biggest issue](#) - lower than in recent years but still in the mix as significant. Despite this, climate and energy have not been particularly prominent themes in election campaigns, which have focused heavily on economic policies, taxes and criticism of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's leadership.

However, the Labour Party made 'clean energy' a key pillar of its manifesto, aiming for a [transition to clean energy by 2030](#). Reducing dependence on foreign gas is a key part of their reasoning. To achieve this, the party plans to "[double onshore wind, triple solar power, and quadruple offshore wind by 2030](#)" and invest in carbon capture and storage (CCS), marine energy and hydrogen. The plans also include extending the life of existing nuclear plants and opening new ones. Unlike the Green Party, which [does not include nuclear power in its clean energy framework](#), Labour views nuclear energy as a necessary component in achieving net-zero emissions.

The Conservative Party's efforts to create divisions around net zero objectives have not been successful. It aims to achieve net zero in an "[affordable and pragmatic](#)" way, without new taxes or burdens on households. Previously, Sunak rolled back targets related to heating, insulation and the banning of petrol cars, a move criticised by the UK's independent [Committee on Climate Change](#), which warned that these changes would significantly impede the achievement of net zero. In contrast, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens advocate achieving net zero by [2045](#) and [2040](#) respectively, emphasising the urgency of immediate action. Labour's manifesto implies they would keep the UK's current target of reaching net zero by 2050.

Despite slightly lower salience than 2019-2021, [sympathy for climate action remains high](#) - although challenges related to the cost of living have complicated the adoption of electric vehicles and heat pumps. Overall, the UK does not see the intense polarisation over climate issues observed, for example, in the US.

For an in-depth look, check CarbonBrief's: [UK election 2024: What the manifestos say on energy and climate change](#)

Energy and transport

- [**America's Clean Energy Jobs Boom: 313,000 New Jobs And Counting**](#) (Forbes)
"The United States' clean energy jobs boom has accelerated in every corner of the country since President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act in August 2022"
- [**EU leaders want more green industry in Europe**](#) (Reuters)
"European Union leaders will call this week for a greater focus on manufacturing green technologies in Europe, as competition to produce electric cars and wind turbines heats up with China and the United States, a draft statement showed."
- [**Renewables surge: Green energy made up the majority of the EU's electricity in 2023**](#) (Euronews)
"Wind and solar power increases combined with a sharp drop in fossil fuels pushed renewables into the lead. Renewable energy was the leading source of electricity in the EU in 2023, according to preliminary data from Eurostat."

- [EU backs 650-billion-euro plan to help cities reach net zero by 2030](#) (Euractiv)
“A group of 112 cities aiming to eliminate their net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 will need a combined 650 billion euros in investments to deliver the pledge, a European Union initiative said on Wednesday.”
- [Geothermal and nuclear energy among Hungarian Council presidency priorities](#) (Euronews)
“The upcoming Hungarian presidency’s work programme broadly reflects EU policy objectives, but it only refers once to ‘renewable’ and natural gas is openly listed for targeted funding.”

Climate movement

- [Future impact of proposed fossil fuel projects must be assessed, UK court rules](#) (The Guardian)
“Landmark judgment says planning bodies must account for burning of extracted fuel when considering site proposals.”
- [Climate lawsuits against companies on the rise: report](#) (France24)
“Since the 2015 Paris Agreement, 230 ‘climate-aligned’ lawsuits have been launched against corporations and trade associations -- more than two-thirds of which were filed since 2020, said the report by the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics.”
- [Climate activists bemoan scant progress on finance as Cop29 looms](#) (The Guardian)
“UN says finding funds to tackle climate crisis is ‘a steep mountain to climb’, as talks end with little agreement.”

Commentary

- [The U.K. Needs A Climate Election—A Vision For Innovation](#) | By Felicia Jackson (Forbes)
“A nature positive net zero transition is not just about the environment, but calls for an economic transformation. Addressing the twin challenges of climate change and nature loss requires addressing systemic problems that underpin the concerns of voters, from inflation to immigration. As the U.K. prepares to go the polls, the lack of vision about the need for system change by either main party should be of concern to business and individuals alike.”
- [Would a far-right election victory in France knock down EU’s green hopes?](#) | By Juliette Portala (Clean Energy Wire)
“Unless Macron’s centrists and the left find a way to avert a far-right victory, the surprise move could unravel progress in the energy and climate policies of the EU’s second largest economy and weaken ambitions at a critical point in time – even though most people in France wish for more effective climate policies.”
- [Our incredible win could change the future of oil and gas in the UK](#) | By Sara Finch (The Guardian)
“The supreme court ruling means it will now be much harder for new fossil-fuel projects to go ahead as their full climate impact will need to be factored in from the start.”

Live monitoring dashboard

Our Talkwalker dashboard offers the latest articles and insights on democratic elections around the world, along with emerging climate narratives.

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