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An Electoral Compass for the European Elections

by [nanne](#)

Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:06:19 AM EST

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The [EU Profiler](#) is now live. This is an interactive 'electoral compass' that works by posing you a set of questions and comparing them to the proposals of the national parties you can elect in the European Parliament elections (hat-tip to [Nomad in today's Salon](#))

Using these compasses has become popular in many European countries because people can't be bothered to closely follow the campaign, and extrapolating wildly from anecdotal evidence, I can say that they often have a decisive impact on the voting behaviour of young people.

Like Nomad and DoDo, I ran the test, in my case, on Germany, and I was struck by the set of questions I was posed. Only 10 out of 30 questions explicitly relate to the European Union, and even less deal with issues that can be meaningfully influenced by the European Parliament.

In the absence of a prominent pan-European dialogue on the issues that matter in the European Election, we are seeing a repeat of the 2004 elections, that is, the elections are used by people to register their feeling about issues other than those on the ballot.

This is perfectly normal behaviour on the part of the voters, who have to deal with the information they can receive, and with the issues they can influence. The political parties are trying to gather that information in a top-down form, which as a collective they are not working out so well - at least, that is the picture that emerges from the EU Profiler.

In the German case, for instance, there is no question on the issue of genetically modified organisms, even though that arguably is a European issue that can be influenced to some extent by the European Parliament. It has also emerged as an early issue in the campaign for the European elections in Germany (see [DoDo's comment](#) in the Salon on the 11th of April and our [exchange](#) yesterday). The minister for agriculture from the conservative Bavarian party CSU has decided to ban the only GMO crop allowed in Germany, Mon 810 maize, because of pressure on the CSU in the European elections.

To map that: this is a federal decision in Germany taken by a member of an essentially

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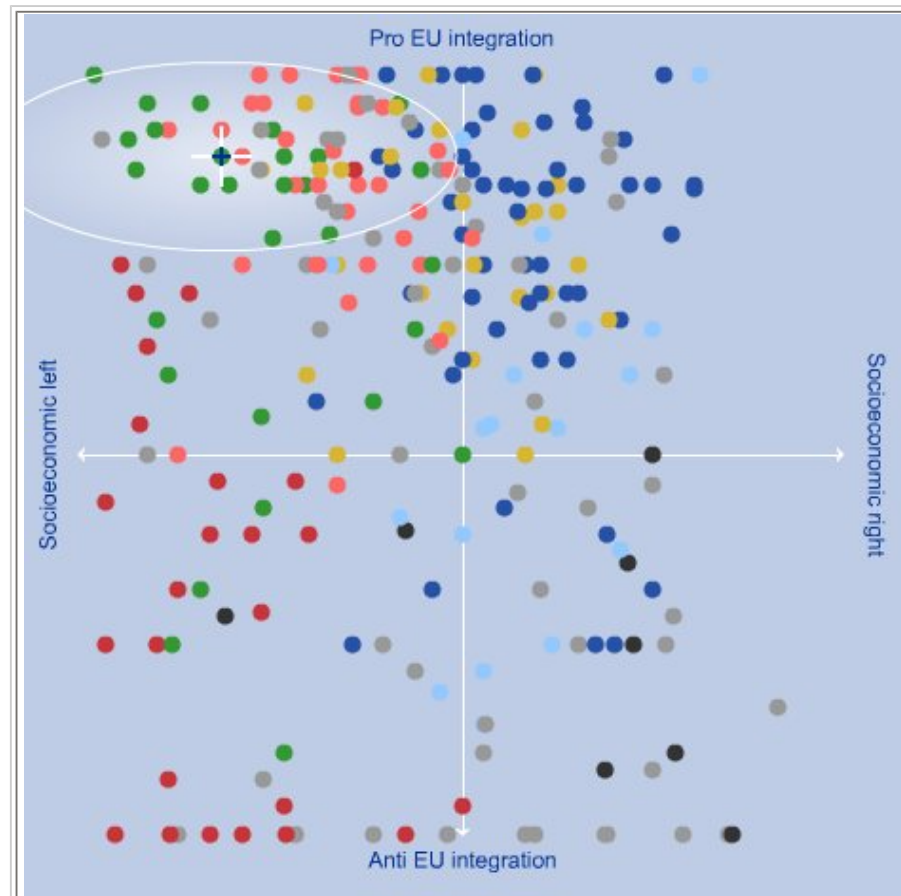
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regional party because of pressure in the European elections on an issue that is European insofar as a technocratic body instated on the European level has approved the product and the European Commission is putting pressure on Member States to allow it, following pressure from the World Trade Organisation on the EU to instate more liberal GMO rules (in the social sciences we call this multilevel governance ;-)).

This too is an issue the European Parliament can't influence directly, but at least it does have some influence and the issue is European. Other prominent European issues that are ignored include intellectual property. The Pirate Party is not represented, although its [German branch](#) is participating in the elections.

The lack of a pan-European dialogue is aggravated by the essential lack of pan-European parties. Sure, there are parties, they do have their manifestos, and sometimes there are party line votes in the EP. But none of the parties are anywhere near unified. They are an outgrowth of the national organisations and mostly serve those. To clearly demonstrate that, see my position in the EU political landscape according to the [EU Profiler](#).



Colour code: Black=Wingers; Blue=Conservatives; Light Blue=Nationalists/sceptics; Gray=Other; Green=Greens; Light Red=Socialists/Social Democrats; Dark Red=Communists/Left Parties; Yolk=Liberals

... the 'European' parties are all over the map.

Display:

An Electoral Compass for the European Elections | 31 comments (31 topical, 0 editorial, 0 hidden)

Tip Jar (4.00 / 5)

I'll be voting in Germany, could also have voted in NL, which is a topic for another story.

by [nanne \(zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com\)](mailto:zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:08:01 AM EST

Re: Tip Jar (none / 1)

You aren't clear in the last sentence. The diagram shows your position as an ellipse, while the many dots are the individual national parties running in the different EU member states. What's all over the place is national parties that are part of the same EP party/ideological direction (same-coloured dots).

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by [DoDo](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:17:07 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: Tip Jar (none / 0)

OK, I changed it.

by [nanne \(zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com\)](mailto:zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:22:00 AM EST

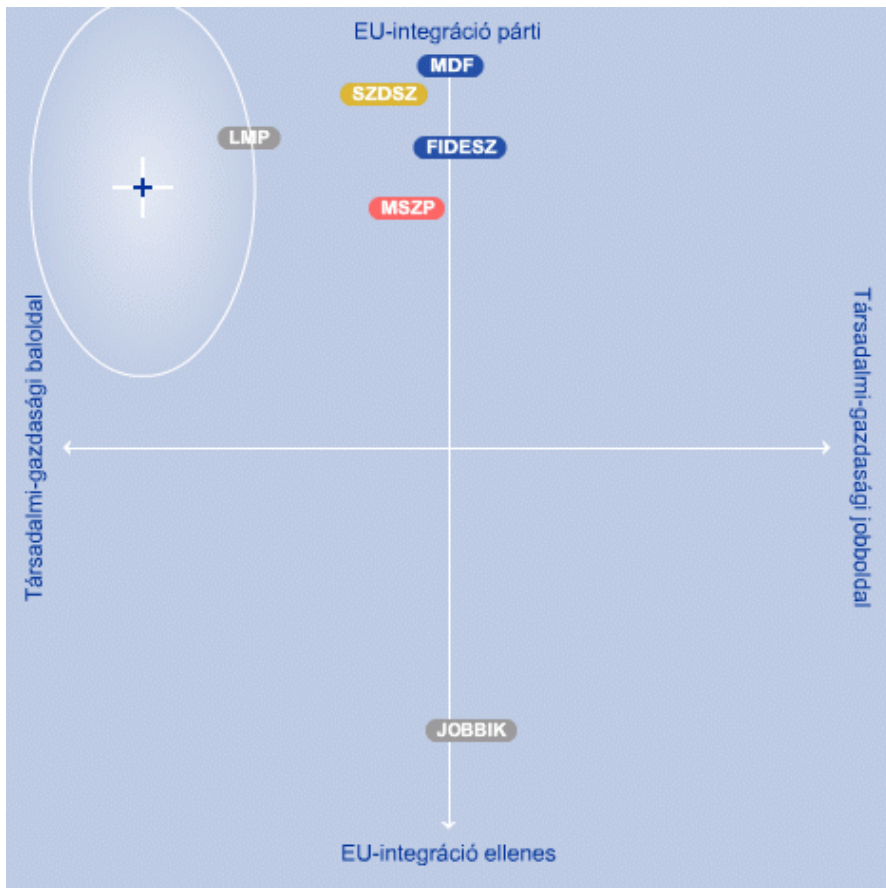
[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass... (none / 1)

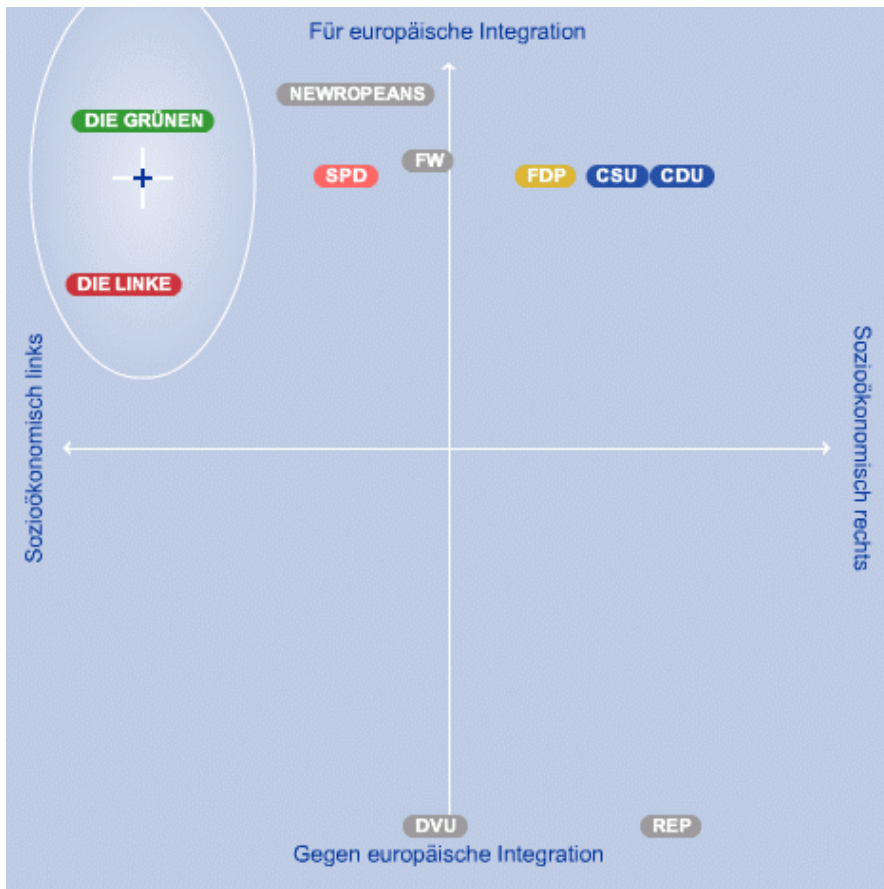
A re-post of my own results:

For the heck of it, I did it for Hungary and Germany. I didn't think in advance so I did both in the native language... so some explanations for the graphs below.

First, the positioning of parties and myself; right-left axis social-economic left-right (methinks that should be two separate dimensions... for a number of parties, extremes in those cancel out), top-down: for-against EU integration.




















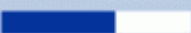





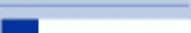



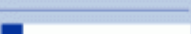




(MDF: small centre-right party with a recent extreme market-liberal makeover; SzDSz: small liberal party; Fidesz: right-populist main party; MSzP: Socialists; LMP: a new moderate Green formation; Jobbik: fascists)



(CSU, CDU: Bavarian/rest of Germany Christian Socialists/Democrats; FDP: [neo-]liberals; FW: Free Voters, localists; SPD: Social Democrats; Die Grünen: Greens; Die Linken: Left Party; DVU, Rep[ublikaner]: far-right)

Next, level of shared values with individual parties:

	Párt	pártegyezés
1	 LMP	80.3 % 
2	 MSZP	58.2 % 
3	 SZDSZ	51.3 % 
4	 Fidesz	50.9 % 
5	 MDF	45.5 % 
6	 Jobbik	29.3 % 

	Partei	Übereinstimmung
1	 Die Linke	83.3 % 
2	 Die Grünen	75.0 % 
3	 Newropeans	60.1 % 
4	 SPD	57.1 % 
5	 FW	41.7 % 
6	 FDP	19.6 % 
7	 DVU	12.5 % 
8	 CSU	11.3 % 
9	 CDU	5.0 % 
10	 REP	0.0 % 

I suspect the reason this test claims I share more with the domestic far-right than the CDU, CSU and FDP is the fascists' support for the social state.

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by DoDo on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:11:46 AM EST

Re: An Electoral Compass... (none / 0)

My best match in Germany is clearly the greens, then SPD/Newropeans. I have a 100% match with the Luxembourg green party, after that the Spanish PS is closest Europe-wide.

The anecdotal evidence is a friend of mine who became convinced he should vote green after finding out his position matched theirs through a national electoral compass. Left to the side is the question of issue selection and, to some extent, salience (the EU Profiler allows for weighting but that doesn't really cut it).

by nanne (zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:20:34 AM EST

[Parent]

Re: An Electoral Compass... (none / 0)

Yep. I should also note that I'm not quite sure what relativised my pro-integrationism for the test.

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by DoDo on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:22:45 AM EST

[Parent]

Re: An Electoral Compass... ([none](#) / [0](#))

As an example, the French Verts and PS are very close by on the compass ; and that may be true of their programs, yet I don't trust the PS to be independent from neoliberalism to any similar extent...

Un roi sans divertissement est un homme plein de misères

by [linca](#) ([antonin POINT lucas AROBASE gmail.com](#)) on [Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:11:41 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass... ([none](#) / [0](#))

The placement of PS caught my eyes, too. See my complaint about conflating economic and social right-left below.

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by [DoDo](#) on [Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:19:20 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Methodological issue ([4.00](#) / [2](#))

When classifying European parties, I feel it is the height of stupidity to conflate economic and social left/right. Not only is there no correlation, but in some regions and ideologies, there is anti-correlation -- meaning that parties are at opposite extremes in the economic and social dimensions, resulting in a fake 'moderate' position in the conflated economic-social dimension.

Then again, a 3D map would be more difficult...

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by [DoDo](#) on [Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:20:42 AM EST](#)

Re: Methodological issue ([none](#) / [0](#))

They do have a spiderweb (or whatever you'd call it) for individual party-by-party analysis, but doing that for multiple parties would indeed require some kind of 3D visualisation.

by [nanne](#) ([zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com](#)) on [Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:34:20 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: Methodological issue ([none](#) / [1](#))

More like 7D.

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by [DoDo](#) on [Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:18:34 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election (4.00 / 2)



I guess I was voting Labour anyway.

by [Colman \(colman at eurotrib.com\)](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:34:54 AM EST

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election (none / 0)

What country is that?

A 'centrist' is someone who's neither on the left, nor on the left.

by [nicta \(nico＠altiva․fr\)](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:08:28 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election ([none / 0](#))

Ireland

Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by [Migeru](#) ([migeru at eurotrib dot com](#)) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:11:51 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election ([none / 0](#))

Looks like Ireland to me...

Un roi sans divertissement est un homme plein de misères

by [linca](#) ([antonin POINT lucas AROBASE gmail.com](#)) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:12:16 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election ([none / 0](#))

ok, found it's Ireland.

A 'centrist' is someone who's neither on the left, nor on the left.

by [nicta](#) ([nico＠altiva․fr](#)) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:15:01 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election ([none / 0](#))

For a instant I thought the LAB was the UK labour party...

Un roi sans divertissement est un homme plein de misères

by [linca](#) ([antonin POINT lucas AROBASE gmail.com](#)) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:10:40 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Nanne ([none / 1](#))

I was hoping you would comment on my 'How the European Parliament Works' diary.

You can't be me, I'm taken

by [Sven Triloqvist](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 09:37:57 AM EST

Re: Nanne ([none / 0](#))

Great effort, Sven! I added some constructive criticism of the details :-)

by [nanne \(zwaerdenmaecker@gmail.com\)](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 10:47:23 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: An Electoral Compass for the European Election ([4.00 / 2](#))

It gives me Sinistra e Liberta as the first choice, followed by the Rifondazione. I was amused to learn that the communists are more supportive of the bankers than I am...

by [gk \(g k quattro due due sette "at" gmail.com\)](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 11:56:55 AM EST

Re: An Electoral Compass... ([4.00 / 2](#))

This compass is comical. The poverty of mainstream euroliberals would be a more proper phrase. According to this "test" I will vote for the fascists (!) in Hungary (my country). In Sweden for the ex-communists, in the Netherlands for the non-socialdemocratic left, and in many countries for the Greens. Fabulous.

by [Dr Minorka](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 12:24:42 PM EST

Origin ([none / 0](#))

Which is the green party at the center?

Clearly, they must be non-political. And probably rational. :)

by [A swedish kind of death](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 04:32:29 PM EST

Re: Origin ([none / 0](#))

Yeşiller Partisi, the Turkish Greens.

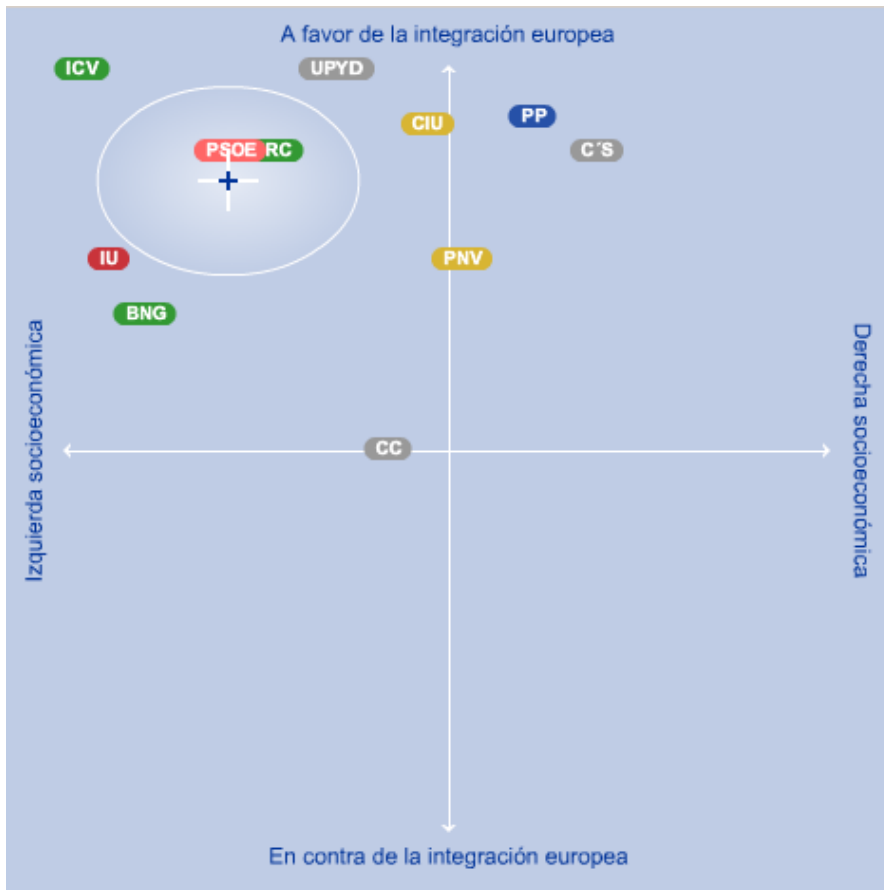
**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by [DoDo](#) on Fri Apr 24th, 2009 at 03:46:30 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Spanish Compass (4.00 / 3)

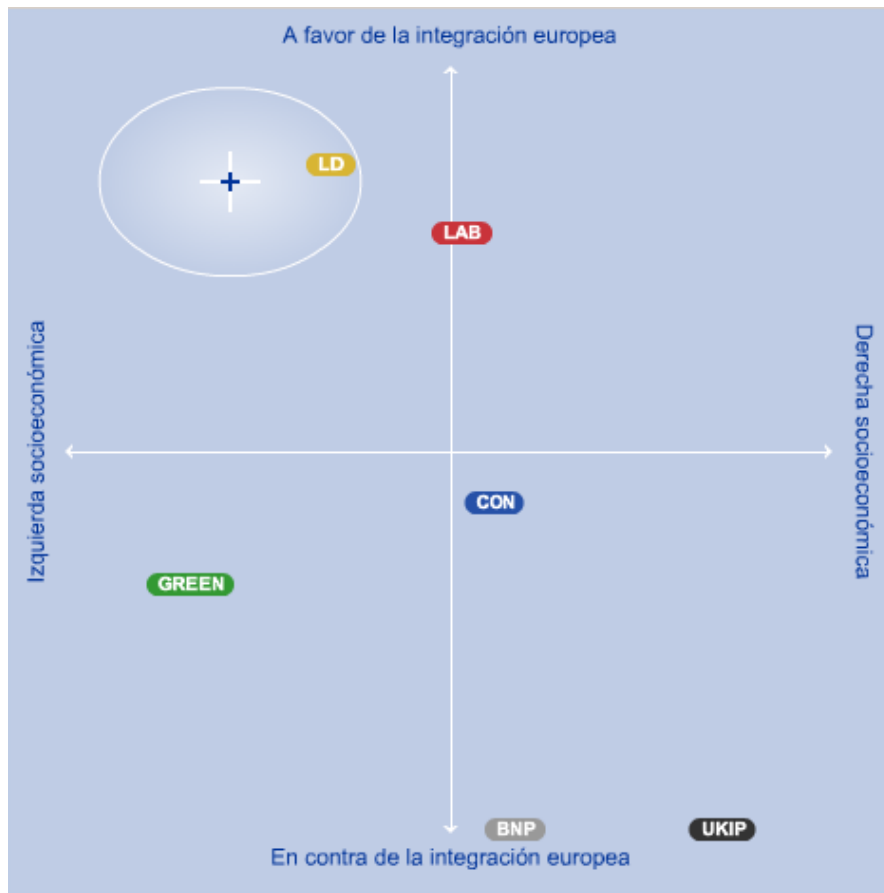


Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by Migeru (migeru at eurotrib dot com) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 05:01:28 PM EST

UK Compass (4.00 / 2)

I guess this is consistent with my choice to join the LibDems and not Labour when I was in the UK...



Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by [Migeru \(migeru at eurotrib dot com\)](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 05:10:15 PM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: UK Compass ([none / 0](#))

Thats strange, when I did it, i landed up pretty much in the same place as you, (a touch down and to the left) but when I looked at the pic it had Labour to the right of the tories, which gave me a chuckle.

Give a politician an inch, and he'll think he's a ruler

by [ceebs \(bunchofwankers \(at\) gmail \(dot\) com\)](#) on Thu Apr 23rd, 2009 at 05:20:43 PM EST

[[Parent](#)]

Re: UK Compass ([none / 0](#))

I have looked at this graph with my own results, but noticed only now: they judge the British Greens more Eurosceptic than the Tories!? Something's not alright there...

**Traitor*, n.*

A benighted individual who perceives an illusory distinction between serving his nation and abetting the criminals who govern it.

by [DoDo](#) on [Fri Apr 24th, 2009 at 03:48:54 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: UK Compass ([none / 0](#))

Just like along the socioeconomic left/right axis we know there is a problem conflating *laissez-faire liberalism* with *civil libertarianism*, so it is in the European integration axis, where it is a problem to conflate political integration with race-to-the-bottom single market competition.

Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by [Migeru](#) ([migeru at eurotrib dot com](#)) on [Fri Apr 24th, 2009 at 03:53:32 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: Spanish Compass ([4.00 / 2](#))

Note: no Spanish party in the lower half on European integration. And only the PP is significantly to the economic right, even more than the nationalist ALDE/ELDR affiliates PNV and CiU.

By the way, CiU replaced their excellent sitting MEP Ignasi Guardans with an orthodox economist who is more of a Catalan nationalist, with emphasis on the nationalism. I think it is a loss. I was toying with the idea of voting for CiU to reelect Guardans, now I'll probably vote PSOE (and Guardans if going to join ZP's Ministry of Culture).

Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by [Migeru](#) ([migeru at eurotrib dot com](#)) on [Fri Apr 24th, 2009 at 04:02:30 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: Spanish Compass ([none / 0](#))

Migeru:

And only the PP is significantly to the economic right

I am not really counting *Ciutadans* because they are marginal - they will at most get one seat. Shockingly, they have affiliated with *Libertas*. And to think they were alleged to be taking votes away from the Socialists when they were created...

Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by [Migeru](#) ([migeru at eurotrib dot com](#)) on [Fri Apr 24th, 2009 at 10:48:14 AM EST](#)

[[Parent](#)]

Re: Spanish Compass ([none](#) / 0)

Hmm, if that compass is correct I should vote for ICV...

Most economists teach a theoretical framework that has been shown to be fundamentally useless. -- James K. Galbraith

by [Migeru](#) ([migeru at eurotrib dot com](mailto:migeru@eurotrib.com)) on Fri Apr 24th, 2009 at 06:06:21 AM EST

[[Parent](#)]

[An Electoral Compass for the European Elections](#) | 31 comments (31 topical, 0 editorial, 0 hidden)

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