



CLOSED DOOR ROUNDTABLE

## Ahead of the US midterms: Lessons of democratic decline, resistance and resilience for Europe

3 June 2026, 10:00-12:00

By invitation only and held in person  
European Parliament

### Description

As the United States approaches the decisive phase of the 2026 midterm elections, the political climate is shaped by overlapping international crises, a news cycle fuelled by presidential provocation, and mounting pressure on democratic institutions from within. This moment offers an opportunity to step back from the daily news cycle and take stock: What is the state of US democracy under a second Trump administration and the broader MAGA movement? Where is resistance from the Democratic Party as well as from activists and NGOs working, where is it failing, and what can European progressives genuinely learn from those approaches? How can we improve transatlantic cooperation and exchange between progressive actors to defend our democracies?

To open the discussion, Cas Mudde, one of the world's leading scholars on the far right and on populism, will deliver a keynote on the causes and current state of democratic backsliding in the United States, the modes of resistance and resilience that have proven effective (and those that have not), and the lessons for Europe's defence of liberal democracy against far-right pressure.

The event takes place as a closed-door roundtable, by invitation only, designed to enable a frank exchange among S&D MEPs in a small circle. It continues an ongoing effort to create dedicated space for substantive discussion on protecting and renewing democracy, with a focus both on analysing far-right parties and movements and, crucially, on developing progressive strategies that are not merely reactive but genuinely proactive.

Convened by Katarina Barley, MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament, the roundtable is organised under a FEPS project and in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation. The series brings leading academics and public intellectuals into direct dialogue with MEPs from the S&D Group.

**About the speaker** Cas Mudde is Distinguished Research Professor of International Affairs at the University of Georgia. A leading scholar on the far right and populism, he is the author and co-author of several books, including, *The Far Right Today* and *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*.



## Preliminary agenda

10:00 – 10:15

### Opening remarks

**Katarina Barley**, MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament

**Uwe Optenhögel**, Vice President, FEPS

**Tobias Mörschel**, Director, FES EU Office Brussels

10:15 – 10:35

### Keynote: Ahead of the US Midterms — Democratic Decline, Resistance, and Resilience: Lessons for Europe

**Cas Mudde**, Professor of International Affairs, University of Georgia

10:35 – 11:50

### Roundtable Discussion

Moderation: Matteo Dressler, Policy Analyst for Democracy and Participation FEPS

11:50 – 12:00

### Closing Remarks

**Ana-Catarina Mendes**, MEP, Vice-President of the S&D Group

*The project that this event is part of is led by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.*

