



The Loop

ECPR's Political Science Blog

ecpr

Report for the ECPR Publications Subcommittee

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A note on our photos: all imagery that appears in this report accompanied a Loop blog piece at some point during 2024



The year in review



Volume and source of published output

At our spring 2024 meeting with ECPR's Publications Subcommittee, we agreed on a new publishing strategy for The Loop, resolving to be more selective over what we publish, and to limit our output to no more than 16 pieces per calendar month. We implemented the new rule from the month of April, and over the calendar year 2024, published **217** blog pieces.

In 2021, only 38% of published blog pieces had been pitched to us direct; however, in 2022 this figure leapt to 75% as our reputation grew, and more and more content arrived



through editors of our series threads. **In 2024, the proportion of pitched blogs in our published output had jumped to a resounding 96.5%**, and is likely to remain in the high nineties for the foreseeable future. While this significantly reduces the commissioning burden on Martin and Johanne, there is, unfortunately, a downside for our gender statistics.



Author gender balance

As the proportion of published content from pitches has grown, we have found it increasingly tough to achieve gender parity: our analysis shows that men are more likely than women to submit a cold pitch via our online portal.

To counteract the tendency, we took affirmative action! In March 2023, [Johanne and Martin thus committed us to take](#)

“

In 2024, the proportion of pitched blog pieces in our published output hit 96.5% and is likely to remain in the high nineties

[up the '50:50 challenge'](#) to achieve gender parity. Our primary strategy for achieving this is (of course) to commission more women than men. However, when we approach a female author who is unable to take up the commission, we do also suggest they recommend another female scholar who may be willing to write for us.

One challenge to meeting our target is the input from series editors (some of whom are very prolific), over whose commissioning we have little control. We have thus worked hard to impress on our third-party editors the importance of reaching out to more women than men in the hope of achieving gender parity in the subsequent body of output.

Although we have not yet succeeded in achieving equal representation, our efforts have still made a significant positive change. **In 2024, we pushed our proportion of published female authors up by 2%, to 46%. We are aiming to achieve full gender parity by the end of 2025; see page 26.**





The year in review



Geographic distribution of writers

As Table 2 on page 7 shows, the worldwide distribution of Loop authors has remained strikingly similar year on year. The UK continues to provide the most contributors (62), followed by Germany with 33 and the US with 24. Italy contributed 21



authors, or 7% of the total, and The Netherlands were very well represented, with 18. Punching above its weight, too, was Austria, with 16 contributors. It was encouraging to see that France, which has been underrepresented on The Loop in previous years (only one in 2023), contributed seven authors.

We published submissions from authors in 36 countries, as far afield as Chile, Mexico and Kazakhstan. Since our 2020 launch, we have published authors from 62 countries around the world. New additions in 2024 were Serbia and Costa Rica.



Career stage and membership status

As with Loop authors' geographical distribution, the spread of authors at different stages of their career has remained reasonably steady (Table 5). 2023 saw a 5% drop in the percentage of pre-doctoral contributors; this had risen back up to 32.5% in 2024. If we take pre- and postdoc scholars as a single group, the percentage has remained fairly steady since launch: 43% in 2021, 52% in 2022, 45% in 2023 and 50.5% in 2024. The year-on-year proportion of member and



After publishing only one author from France last year, the number of French contributors rose to a much healthier seven in 2024

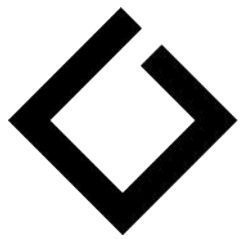
non-member contributors is also pretty consistent. Full or Associate Member affiliates made up 70% of contributions in 2021, 55% in 2022, 64% in 2023 and 65.5% in 2024.

In 2024, 97 or 36% of Loop authors were also members of at least one ECPR Standing Group or Network – and many, of course, belong to several. That's over a third of the total number of authors (duplicates removed), and, a 7% rise on last year's figure of 29%. See page 11 for a breakdown of how many authors belonged to which specific interest group.

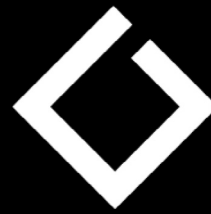
Loop digest e-shots

Using ECPR's email software package, Brevo, we build monthly digest emails, each of which contains synopses, images and links to all blog pieces published during that time period, along with a general call to action for submissions. The number of subscribers to ECPR's 'Publications' mailing list has more than doubled since the same time in 2023, and Digests now reach nearly 23,000 subscribers.

The open rate for e-shots in the first two months of the year were a very healthy 30+% but dropped below 20% in March, April and May. For the remainder of the year, however, they remained consistently above 20%, peaking at 28% in September. Click-through rates varied month on month, but our most successful e-shots were in June (535 clicks) and February (454 clicks). These mailshots consistently result in the submission of new pitches to our online form – typically 2–3 per broadcast – so in addition to boosting readership figures, they remain a valuable source of fresh content, as borne out by our Author Feedback (see Q4 pie chart on page 20).



The year in review



Twitter-X and BlueSky followers

From 2020–2022, Twitter was our most important social media tool. But following [Elon Musk's acquisition of the platform](#) in late 2022, and its re-branding as 'X', although we have continued to attract new followers, our overall following has barely grown.



In contrast with earlier X-challengers Mastodon and Threads, BlueSky seems here to stay and, in March 2024, we launched [@ECPRTTheLoop.BSky.Social](#). Our follower numbers received a huge boost after Trump's re-election in early November, and the continuing disillusionment with Musk's X. By the end of the year, this new account had amassed 1,746 followers.



Loop presence on ecpr.eu

The Loop slider on ECPR's home page carousel continues to be refreshed each week by Charlie with a header image and standfirst of a broad-appeal blog piece.



The Loop at ECPR's General Conference

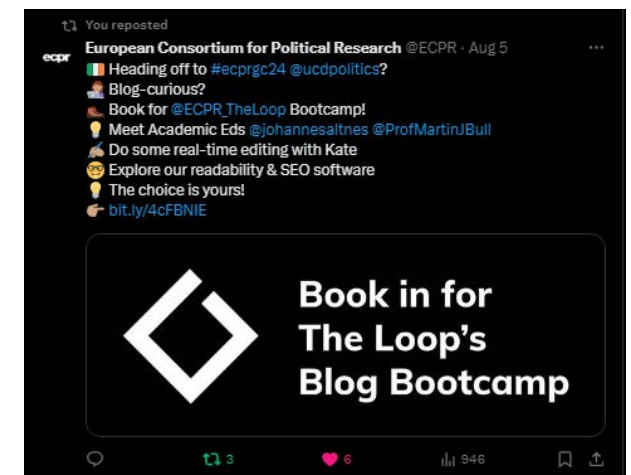
At the 2023 General Conference in Prague we advertised in-person 'Blog Bootcamp' sessions, promoted via the marketing department's know-before-you-go e-campaigns and on



Our BlueSky following received a significant boost when Donald Trump's was re-elected and users deserted Twitter-X in their droves

Twitter-X. Kate created a dedicated sub-page on theloop.ecpr.eu (since taken down). Building on the success of this initiative, we repeated the exercise at the 2024 Conference in Dublin.

First-time bloggers were invited to book in for sessions with the Academic Editors and with Kate. The concept was that Martin and Johanne began by offering broad-brush advice on how to approach the task of crafting a blog piece. Participants were then invited to 'peek behind the curtain' at The Loop's WordPress editing software, with guidance and supervision from Kate. We urged those taking part to bring along some raw copy of their own for editing according to Loop house style, so they could get a realistic sense of how heavy an edit they might receive if they were to submit. Alternatively, impromptu participants were given some 'real' unedited (anonymised) copy from The Loop archive with which to carry out the exercise.





The year in review




We had 21 participants, some of whom we worked with individually, and some in pairs. There were 10 women and 11 men. Those who still had time to experiment with the editing software on WordPress seemed to enjoy the challenge!

As in 2023, Bootcamps were also a great outreach exercise for attracting younger, non-native English-speaking scholars who may otherwise have felt daunted by the prospect of submitting to an English-language blogsite.

At the time of writing (January 2025) we have already published blog pieces by two of the scholars who joined us for a Bootcamp session ([Mimi Mihăilescu](#) and [Thomas Poguntke](#)), and we have pieces by Luca Verzichelli, John Erik Fossum and Rachel Gibson promised for later this spring.

Scholarly collaborations

In early March 2024, we were approached by  Illiberal Wave series lead Luca Manucci to say that Andrea Pető (CEU) and Alina Dragolea (NUPSPA Bucharest / Civica) had prepared for The Loop a collection of eight blog pieces by early-career female scholars, on a theme of [Gendering Illiberalism](#).

We published the eight pieces over the course of the spring, accompanied by a branded banner (below) acknowledging the three collaborating institutions:



In April, we received an email from [Benjamin Carver](#), a teacher of English for academic purposes at European University Institute, Florence. He was offering students a course on blog-writing in political science, with the 1,000-word format of The Loop as his template. He proposed offering the resulting articles to The Loop for publication. The Academic Editors agreed to give these pieces particularly thorough feedback, given the authors' relative inexperience. This term, Benjamin had only two



takers for his course. We published a piece on [communication by central banks](#), and one on the [institutionalisation of memory](#) in European museums, flagging the collaboration with the banner above. Building on this early success, we are confident of attracting a more substantial cohort in 2025.

euobserver

In late June, we were contacted by Alejandro Tauber of [EU Observer](#), a non-profit EU affairs news site. He was interested in republishing a selection of Loop blogs on topics relevant to their readership of journalists, policy-makers and academics.


The first to be republished was Mimi Mihăilescu's piece on the [Meme-ification of politics in Romania](#). All republished pieces will carry a hyperlinked source credit, as below:



Best Blog Prize 2023 (awarded 2024)

In 2023, thirteen blog pieces made the longlist, selected for their ability to communicate scholarly concepts to an audience outside academe's 'ivory tower'. Our jurors were **Marianna Karakoulaki**, University of Birmingham, who is a [researcher, journalist, and photographer](#) based in Cambridge. Joining her were **Chris Gilson**, Managing Editor of the [US politics and policy blog USAPP](#), and **Danielle Pullan**, who [primarily researches abortion policy and abortion access](#) in Europe,

In spring 2024, our jurors scored each longlisted piece for its originality, readability, and significance / relevance, to leave a shortlist of the top three highest-scoring articles. Jurors deliberated among themselves to settle upon a winner.

In the event, [Brandon Mack's contribution](#) to Hans Asenbaum's  [Democratic Transformations series](#), which our jurors described as 'a compelling, gut-wrenching read' emerged victorious. On learning of his win, Brandon told us: 'I am incredibly proud and honored to receive this award. My hope is that this blog helps us to critically think about how we move from being just an ally to an accomplice and continue to move in a way where we are valuing each other more.'

Read the full story [in Kate's blog piece](#).





Author profiling



Table 1: Published authors 2024, by region *Many of The Loop's articles are multi-authored; the total number of authors is therefore greater than the number of published articles*

Regions	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	%
United Kingdom & Ireland	5	6	9	2	5	6	4	6	3	6	12	3	67	22.5
Germany, Austria & Switzerland	3	8	12	6	5	3		2	4	2	3	3	51	17
France	1	1	1				1	1		2			7	2
Italy	4	1	2		4	1		3		2	1	3	21	7
Spain, Portugal & Greece	2	2	4	2		2	4		1		5	1	23	7.5
Benelux	2		3	3	1	4			1	3	1	2	20	6.5
Nordics	5	3	6	1	2	2	5	2			3	1	30	10
Central and Eastern Europe	3	4	1	4	1	2	1			1	1	2	20	6.5
United States & Canada	2		5	3	5		1	4	2	1		5	28	9.5
Rest of the World	3	5	3	2	1	2	4		10	1	1	2	34	11.5
Total	30	30	46	23	24	22	20	18	21	18	27	22	301	

2024 authors, by country	Bulgaria 1	Czech Republic 6	Germany 33	Ireland 5	The Netherlands 18	Romania 3	Switzerland 2
	Canada 4	Denmark 4	Greece 2	Israel 7	Norway 7	Serbia 2	Turkey 7
Australia 5	Chile 1	Estonia 3	Hong Kong 6	Italy 21	Poland 1	South Africa 2	United Kingdom 62
Austria 16	China 1	Finland 4	Hungary 4	Kazakhstan 1	Portugal 8	Spain 13	United States 24
Belgium 2	Costa Rica 2	France 7	India 1	Mexico 1		Sweden 15	

Table 2: Published authors, by region; year-on-year comparison

Year	UK & Ireland	Germany, Austria & Switzerland	France	Italy	Spain, Greece & Portugal	Benelux	Nordic countries	CEE countries	USA & Canada	Rest of the World
2021	23.5%	19%	1%	9.5%	3%	7%	10.5%	5%	8%	13.5%
2022	25.5%	16%	1%	5%	5%	7.5%	5%	6%	13%	16%
2023	18%	18.25%	0.25%	8.5%	6.25%	8%	10%	5%	13%	12.75%
2024	22.5%	17%	2%	7%	7.5%	6.5%	10%	6.5%	9.5%	11.5%



Author profiling



Loop authors, by career stage

The Loop has maintained a consistent spread of contributions from scholars at every stage of their career. This year saw our highest-ever proportion of predoctoral contributors: 32.5%. Published pieces from senior scholars dropped to its lowest proportion: 11.5%. We also published a handful of authors working outside academe, including geopolitics analyst and lawyer [Sebastian Contin Trillo-Figueroa](#), educator and author [Titus Alexander](#), freelance writer [Ankita Mukherjee](#) and asylum advisor [Lida Ahmad](#).

Authors' institutional membership

The Loop is a benefit for scholars at ECPR Member institutions, and an outlet for those outside our membership community. By the end of 2024, **65.5%** of our contributions had come from scholars at Full or Associate Member institutions; a 1.5% rise on the previous year. But the 34.5% of contributions from authors at non-member universities demonstrates how we also reach out to scholars from less affluent countries who may not have the resources to take part in (eg) ECPR academic events.

Month	Non-academic	Pre-doc, PhD / unaffiliated	Postdoc	Lecturer	Senior / Prof	Total
January		11	4	11	4	30
February		11	7	11	1	30
March		10	13	14	9	46
April		13	5	5		23
May		5	7	9	3	24
June		6	3	11	2	22
July		2	4	8	6	20
August		7	2	7	2	18
September	2	7	2	6	6	21
October	1	7	2	8	1	18
November	1	9	4	14		27
December		9	1	11	1	22
Total	4	93	54	115	35	301
%	1.5	31	18	38	11.5	

Month	Non-Member	Full Member	Associate Member	Total
January	9	20	1	30
February	12	18		30
March	12	33	1	46
April	10	13		23
May	13	11		24
June	6	16		22
July	3	16	1	20
August	11	17		18
September	8	13		21
October	9	8	1	18
November	2	25		27
December	9	12	1	22
Total	104	192	5	301
%	34.5	64	1.5	

Year	Pre-doc, PhD or not affiliated / non-academic		Postdoc		Lecturer		Senior or Professor		Total
2021	65	22%	63	21%	107	36%	63	21%	298
2022	93	30%	67	22%	93	30%	57	18%	310
2023	103	25%	82	20%	129	31%	101	24%	415
2024	97	32.5%	54	18%	115	38%	35	11.5%	301

Year	Non-member		Full member		Associate member		Total
2021	88	30%	203	68%	7	2%	298
2022	139	45%	162	52%	9	3%	310
2023	149	36%	251	60%	15	4%	415
2024	104	34.5%	192	64%	5	1.5%	301



Author profiling



Table 7: Published authors 2024, by gender

Month	Male	Female	Total authors	% Female
January	24	6	30	20
February	17	13	30	43
March	21	25	46	54
April	10	13	23	57
May	14	10	24	42
June	13	9	22	41
July	13	7	20	35
August	11	7	18	38
September	12	9	21	42
October	8	10	18	56
November	14	13	27	48
December	7	15	22	68
Total	164	137	301	
%	54	46		

Table 8: Published authors, by gender; year-on-year comparison

Year	Male	Female	Total	% Female
2021	186	112	298	38
2022	196	114	310	37
2023	232	183	415	44
2024	164	137	301	46

Gender targets for published pieces

We are happy to report that we achieved a 2% year-on-year rise in the proportion of female published authors, up to 46% from 44% in 2023. See Table 8. As per Table 7, in March and April of last year, we managed to exceed parity, helped in part by our successful [International Women's Day](#) collection.

Aspiring Loop contributors can pitch their idea spontaneously using our simple online form, or an Editor may reach out by email or on social media, to commission a piece on a timely topic. As our series threads have gained traction, pieces commissioned by third-party editors also represent a considerable proportion of our output. Indeed, **of the 217 blog pieces we published in 2024, 72, or 33%, were attached to one of our series threads**, 35 of those to [The Future of Populism](#) series alone.

As Tables 9–12 on page 10 show, the spontaneous pitches we receive are more likely to come from men than from women, although the gap has narrowed considerably this year. In 2023, the proportion of pitched published content from a woman or a female-led team had leapt to from just 28% in 2022 to 43.5%; a rise of 17%. As Table 10 overleaf shows, the percentage held reasonably steady in 2024, at 43%.



In 2024, the proportion of pitched published content from a woman or a female-led team remained reasonably steady, at 43%



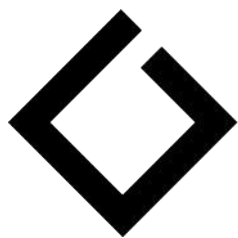
Strategies to maintain gender balance

One means of tackling the gender disparity is to commission more blogs from women. However, given the high copy flow, and the PSC decision to limit publication frequency, Martin and Johanne needed to do very little commissioning in 2024. Indeed, only eight blog pieces derived from a commission – see Table 13.

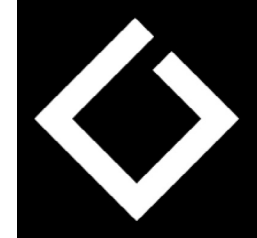
So while the percentage of female or female team-led published blog pieces stood at a robust 62.5%, this positive statistic has little influence on the gender balance of our published output. See page 26 for what we intend to do about this.

Gender parity in readership stats

Of our 20 most-read 2024 blog posts (page 15), 13 are by a single male or all-male group, and only five by a single woman or all-female group. This is a very different picture from 2023, when representation was precisely 50:50. Of course, we have no control over this statistic, other than to continue to strive for the best possible representation for female authors on the blog site.



Pitches vs commissions



Routes to publication

In 2024 only eight blog pieces, less than 4% of our total, derived from a commission. Table 13's 'Total' column tracks the sharp yearly decline. By our third year of operation, 94% of published content came via a cold pitch or third-party (series editor) referral. This had grown to 96.5% in 2024 and is likely to remain around this figure. Since the majority of pitches we receive are from male authors, men also make up the lion's share of rejected pitches.

Table 9: Published blog pieces 2024, pitch vs commission

Month	Pitches	Commissions	Total	% Pitches
January	24	1	25	96
February	19		19	100
March	30	2	32	94
April	16		16	100
May	16		16	100
June	16	1	17	94
July	13	3	16	81
August	12		12	100
September	14	1	15	87
October	10		10	100
November	18		18	100
December	16		16	100
Total	209	8	217	
%	96.5	3.5		

Table 10: All published pitched blog pieces, 2024

Month	Total	Female or F-led	Male or M-led	% Female or F-led
January	24	5	19	21
February	19	7	12	37
March	30	13	17	43
April	16	10	6	62.5
May	16	6	10	38
June	16	5	11	31
July	13	3	10	24
August	12	4	8	33
September	14	7	7	50
October	10	7	8	53
November	18	12	6	67
December	16	11	5	69
Total	209	90	119	43%

Table 11: Published blog pieces, pitches vs commissions; year-on-year comparison

Year	Pitches	Commissions	Total	% Pitches
2021	82	136	218	38
2022	182	62	244	75
2023	270	17	287	94
2024	209	8	217	96.5

Table 12: All pitches (including those rejected*), male vs female; year-on-year comparison

Year	Male or M-led	Female or F-led	Didn't say	Total	% Female
2021	63	31	2	96	32
2022	137	51		188	27
2023	162	125		287	44
2024	144	96		240	40

**In 2024, 31 online pitches were rejected by Academic Editors; 25 (81%) from men and 6 (9%) from women*

Table 13: All commissions, including published pieces and those not accepted or delivered, male vs female; year-on-year comparison

Year	Male	Female	Multi-author, led by male	Multi-author, led by female	Total	% female or female-led
2021	93	69	19	5	186	40
2022	14	37	5	2	58	67
2023	3	19	2	8	33	82
2024	3	3		2	8	62.5



Spontaneous pitches have reached such a high volume that less than 4% of The Loop's published output now derives from commissions



Standing Group members



Correlation of authors published on The Loop during 2024 with membership of ECPR Standing Groups and Research Networks

Standing Group or Research Network	No. of authors
(Anti-)Corruption and Integrity	3
Affective Polarization	10
Analytical Politics and Public Choice	2
Autocracies and Global Governance	4
Central and East European Politics	13
Citizenship	4
Comparative Political Institutions	8
Critical Peace and Conflict Studies	3
Democratic Innovations	8
Differentiated Integration in the EU	7
Elites and Political Leadership	10
Energy Politics, Policy, and Governance	5
Environmental Politics	6
European Union	24
Extremism and Democracy	22
Federalism and Regionalism	3
Food Policy and Governance	1
Gender and Politics	25
Human Rights and Transitional Justice	6
Identity	5
Interest Groups	5
International Political Theory	2

Standing Group or Research Network	No. of authors
International Relations	6
Internet and Politics	4
Kantian Political Thought	2
Knowledge and Governance	5
Knowledge Politics and Policies	2
Latin American Politics	5
Law and Courts	3
Local Government and Politics	4
Mediterranean Politics and Society	3
Methods of Normative Political Theory	3
Migration and Ethnicity	9
Organised Crime	2
Parliaments	10
Participation and Mobilisation	14
Political Anticipation	2
Political Communication	15
Political Concepts	5
Political Culture	2
Political Economy and Welfare State Politics	5
Political Methodology	12
Political Networks	1

Standing Group or Research Network	No. of authors
Political Parties	19
Political Psychology	8
Political Representation	8
Political Sociology	8
Political Theory	5
Political Violence	2
Politics and Technology	4
Presidential Politics	2
Public Opinion and Voting Behaviour	19
Public Policy	3
Regulatory Governance	3
Religion and Politics	3
Southern European Politics	10
Statehood, Sovereignty and Conflict	1
Teaching and Learning Politics	5
The Political Theory of Elections	2
The Sciences of the Democracies	4
Theoretical Perspectives in Policy Analysis	2
Voting Advice Applications	2
Young ECPR Network on Europeanisation (YEN)	4



Published blogs, by category

Category	Number of blogs
Populism	36
🌐 Future of Populism	35
Elections, Radical right-wing politics	24
Gender and politics	23
European Union	22
Security	16
Eastern European politics	14
👤 Autocracies with Adjectives, Russia	13
Social media	12
American politics	11
Autocracy, Democracy, Ukraine, Warfare	10
Latin American politics, Middle East, Turkey, 🌐 Illiberal Wave, Illiberalism, International relations, Political communication	8
Western European politics	7
Africa, British politics, Coalitions, 🗳️ Democratic transformations, Italy, Political science profession, Politics and religion	6

Category	Number of blogs
🗳️ Constraints on academic freedom, Climate change, Democratic innovations, EU foreign policy, Foreign policy, India, 🌈 Gendering Democracy	5
China, LGBTQ, Political parties, Political violence, Politics and the media, Protest movements, Welfare	4
🦋 Science of Democracy, Migration, Covid-19, Deliberative democracy, Germany, Migration, Parliaments, Political representation, Political theory	3
Asian politics, East Asian politics, Environmental politics, Feminism, International development, Ireland, 📍 Rescuing Democracy, Political campaigns, Political participation, Refugees	2
Afghanistan, Balkans, Blogging, Brazil, Brexit, 🌐 EU enlargement dilemmas, Education policy, Energy policy, European integration, Globalisation, Health policy, Human rights, Independence movements, International organisations, Islam, Judicial politics, Law and courts, Organised crime, Political concepts, Political economy, Political sociology, Presidential politics, Public policy, Social movements, South Asian politics, Sport, Teaching and learning, Terrorism, Trade policy	1



Key themes of 2024



Israel-Hamas conflict

By spring 2024, The Loop had published only one article dealing explicitly with the Israel-Hamas conflict. The political science community appeared reluctant to comment. In April, however, a group of scholars [submitted an open letter](#) to ECPR's Executive Committee, calling on it to condemn the Israeli military campaign. ECPR declined. This prompted Vladimir Bortun, a signatory, to [write a blog piece](#) for our [“Constraints on Academic Freedom”](#) series, critiquing ECPR's lack of action. In response, ex-EC member [Hana Kubátová](#) offered a counterargument: when learned societies speak collectively on political controversies, they deprive individual scholars of their academic freedom. This, in turn, prompted [Catherine Moury](#) and [Adam Standing](#) to contribute articles urging scholars to take a stand on the conflict, and speak out.

In June, [Firuze Sezgin](#) wrote a piece describing how leftists and conservative Islamists had become unlikely allies in the quest for peace in Gaza.



War in Ukraine

As the war in Ukraine approached its second anniversary, many authors turned to the conflict. Eban Raymond explained how Ukraine's [ageing population](#) will hamper postwar recovery, and investigated the legality of [conscripting Ukrainian citizens abroad](#). Davide Genini analysed why [the Ukrainian counter-offensive failed](#), and speculated on the outcome of the [Ukraine Peace Summit](#). [Lena Surzhko-Harned](#) argued against categorising Ukrainians reductively as either ethno-nationalists or civic democrats. [Katsiaryna Lozka and Vera Axyonova](#) looked at how the war is also being waged in the



Our [“Constraints on Academic Freedom”](#) series played host to a lively exchange about whether ECPR should take a stand on the Israel-Hamas conflict

information space. Finally, Albrecht Rothacher argues that Western weakness in the face of Russian aggression threatens [worldwide conflagration](#). In another piece, he considers [five different potential scenarios](#) for the war's outcome.

Artificial Intelligence

The inexorable rise of AI is a growing focus for EU authors. In January, [Soumi Banerjee and Dipjyoti Paul](#) warned that AI advancements could widen the gap between rich and poor. In April, [Silvija Vuković](#) introduced the phenomenon of chatbot politicians. In June, [Mahmoud Javadi](#) looked at what the Council of Europe's treaty on AI means for similar UN efforts. [Jason Tucker](#) examined the AI pledges (or lack thereof) in the manifestos of all major parties in the run-up to the UK general election. In July, [Henrik Skaug Sætra](#) contemplated whether AI could help revitalise democracy. [Giulia Dal Bello](#) explored the growing intrusion of AI surveillance into public life. And [Filip Bialy](#) revealed how some in President Trump's new cabinet espouse a so-called 'transhumanist' ideology in relation to AI.





Key themes of 2024



Conspiracy theories and social media

Courtney Blackington and Frances Cayton questioned why [some conspiracy theories](#), but not others, stay popular on social media. Later in the year, they revealed how populist politicians promote conspiracy theories [only when speaking to the faithful](#). [Mimi Mihăilescu](#) – who found The Loop through our Dublin bootcamp initiative – offered a number of pieces on how meme culture is shaping politics in Romania, and another on the ‘Dark MAGA’ movement in the US. In the aftermath of Trump’s re-election Sanne van Oosten examined the conspiracy theories peddled by the Trump campaign to [discredit Kamala Harris](#).

2024: the big election year

Countries representing more than half the world’s population went to the polls in 2024. In January, [Carl Henrik Knutsen](#) speculated on the implications for electoral autocracies, and for



democracies, around the world. Four posts focused on the UK elections in July, by [Ed Goodger](#), [Monika Meislová](#), [Jason Tucker](#), and [Hannah Bunting](#). [Giovanni Capoccia](#) explored the 2024 fragmentation of the French electorate. In September, [Thomas Poguntke](#) considered the implications of shock election results in the German Länder. [Ivaylo Dinev](#) and [Dragomir Stoyanov](#) contributed pieces on the seemingly endless rounds of elections in their native Bulgaria. [Dennis Shen](#) speculated that election results in Georgia could damage the country’s stability. Finally, [Pelin Ayan Musil and Sultan Tepe](#) argued that success for opposition parties in Turkey’s local elections revealed the vulnerabilities of the country’s authoritarian President Erdoğan.



More than half the world’s population went to the polls in 2024, producing a rich seam of election-focused Loop blog pieces

In June, [James F. Downes](#) warned that European Parliament elections would likely lead to record representation for populist far-right parties. [Michal Grahn](#) suggested how non-straight voters might mobilise to help keep far-right forces at bay.

In autumn, all eyes were on the US. Ahead of the election, [Hans Asenbaum](#) argued, optimistically, that Kamala Harris’ race and gender would not influence voters’ perceptions of her as a presidential candidate. [Frédéric Strack](#) looked at the role of religion in differentiating the Republican and Democratic approaches to politics. [Richard Johnson](#) considered how TV debates influence voter choice.

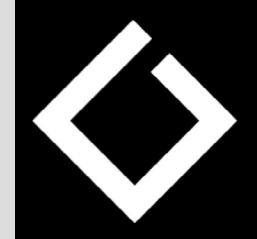
Climate emergency

In April, [Sofia Henriks](#) speculated whether voters worry less about the climate when they have to pay more for goods and services. Later in the year, [Mahir Yazar](#) described how populists are rising up to challenge progressive climate movements.





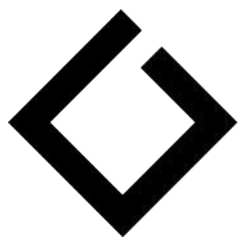
Top 20 most-read of 2024



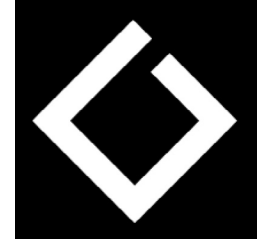
Figures captured 14 January 2025

Blog title	Author/s and publication date	Page views
The third year of the Ukraine war and its possible end	Albrecht Rothacher 14 March	7,265
How Dark MAGA memes are shaping radical belief systems	Mimi Mihăilescu 6 November	5,805
🗣️ Not a race race: why it doesn't matter whether Kamala Harris 'became Black'	Hans Asenbaum 3 October	3,958
🌈 Getting paid to have children: Hungary's 'carefare' regime	Eva Fodor 6 April	3,601
What caused the riots in Britain?	Paul Whiteley 22 August	3,234
The Turkification of Kurdistan: the world looks on	Loqman Radpey 19 August	2,365
Why are Russians struggling to access YouTube?	Olga Vlasova 2 October	2,140
Techno-nationalist rhetoric consolidates Erdoğan's power in Turkey	Abdullah Esin, Mehmet Yaşar Altundağ 13 February	1,465
Does Hungary still belong in the European Union?	Sebastian Contin Trillo-Figueroa, James F. Downes 16 September	1,443
War on two fronts: Ukraine's demographic crisis	Eban Raymond 3 January	1,199

Blog title	Author/s and publication date	Page views
A new axis of evil?	Albrecht Rothacher 6 February	991
Kurdistan: a double-edged sword for Turkey	Loqman Radpey 19 December	919
Surprising stats: the worst economic losses from cyber catastrophes	Tom Johansmeyer 12 March	910
Mainstream parties adopting far-right rhetoric simply increases votes for far-right parties	Antonia May, Christian Czymara 5 February	802
How powerful are polls in influencing election outcomes?	Werner Krause, Christina Gahn 12 February	723
🗳️ Scholarly societies and political crises: the case for neutrality as academic freedom	Hana Kubátová 18 June	719
🗳️ What is political science for? A comment on ECPR's silence over Gaza	Vladimir Bortun 22 May	671
🌐 The geography of European populism: unveiling nuances beyond stereotypes	Mirko Crulli 11 January	664
Trust in artificial intelligence makes Trump/Vance a transhumanist ticket	Filip Bialy 24 October	661
'No single men please, we're Irish': why crime and security matter in far-right discourse	Claire Hamilton 9 February	654



Google analytics



	Page impressions	Top-growing pages compared to previous month		Top-performing pages, by clicks		How people find The Loop, by clicks		Top-performing search queries, by clicks		Devices, by clicks		Top countries, by clicks	
January	734K	Singh	+340	Radford	5.75K	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	+59	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	297	Desktop	7.99K	USA	3.1K
		Regnier	+241	Singh	748	suwalki gap	+46	ukraine war losses tracker	292	Mobile	7.95K	UK	2.27K
		Rinaldi	+106	Regnier	344	fascism in india	+45	ukraine losses vs russia losses	220	Tablet	235	India	1.09
February	719K	Radford	+728	Radford	6.48K	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	+94	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	391	Desktop	8.26K	USA	3.72K
		Merkouraki	+51	Singh	597	maria merkouraki	+78	ukraine war losses tracker	329	Mobile	7.87K	UK	2.1K
		Patil	+46	van Esch	318	ukraine war losses tracker	+37	ukraine losses vs russia losses	218	Tablet	268	India	947
March	700K	Rothacher	+564	Radford	3.02K	ukraine war end	+68	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	250	Desktop	7.94K	USA	3K
		Twinomujuni	+152	Singh	585	when will ukraine war end	+42	ukraine losses vs russia losses	138	Mobile	6.49K	UK	1.82K
		Raymond	+95	Rothacher	564	why does catalonia want independence	+36	angela merkel leadership style	80	Tablet	235	India	1.03K
April	663K	Rothacher	+1.52K	Radford	2.17K	how will ukraine war end	+188	how will ukraine war end	209	Desktop	8.62K	USA	3.33K
		Fodor	+83	Rothacher	2.09K	when will ukraine war end	+155	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	203	Mobile	6.77K	UK	1.91K
		Mancebo	+72	Singh	554	how will the ukraine war end	+78	when will ukraine war end	197	Tablet	220	India	1.16K
May	794K	Rothacher	+1.55K	Rothacher	3.64K	how will ukraine war end	+137	how will ukraine war end	346	Desktop	9.17K	USA	3.62K
		Radford	+508	Radford	2.68K	when will ukraine war end	+107	when will ukraine war end	304	Mobile	8.73K	UK	2.48K
		Jensehaugen	+192	Singh	405	how will the ukraine war end	+96	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	282	Tablet	290	India	1.07K
June	717K	Downes	+178	Rothacher	2.72K	how will the ukraine war end	+23	when will ukraine war end	260	Mobile	7.78K	USA	2.61K
		De Vries	+91	Radford	1.99K	causes of coup d'etat in west africa	+18	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	172	Desktop	6.7K	UK	1.86K
		Twinomujuni	+72	Twinomujuni	465	antisemitism	+13	how will ukraine war end	155	Tablet	283	India	920



Google analytics



	Page impressions	Top-growing pages compared to previous month		Top-performing pages, by clicks		How people find The Loop, by clicks			Top-performing search queries, by clicks			Devices, by clicks		Top countries, by clicks	
July	670K	Bunting	+237	Rothacher	1.78K	kisne mana ki samajik loktantra jivan jeene ka ek tarika hai (Who thought social democracy is a way of life)	+31	how will ukraine war end	165	Mobile	6.84K	USA	2.44K		
		Bortun	+197	Radford	1.48K	digital playground	+31	when will ukraine war end	142	Desktop	5.29K	UK	1.72K		
		Meislová	+182	Twinomujuni	415	what is the radical left	+23	when will the war in ukraine end	96	Tablet	221	India	959K		
August	725K	Whiteley	+1.74K	Radford	1.89K	london riots	+164	london riots	164	Mobile	7.28K	USA	2.72K		
		Radford	+414	Whiteley	1.74K	ukraine losses vs russia losses	+67	why does catalonia want independence	119	Desktop	5.58K	UK	1.69K		
		McGee	+142	Rothacher	799	riots in london	+60	ukraine losses vs russia losses	112	Tablet	193	India	1.03K		
September	871K	Jahanbegloo	+319	Radford	1.39K	edward said	+51	ukraine losses vs russia losses	115	Desktop	7.47K	USA	3.24K		
		Fodor	+186	Whiteley	1.27K	angela merkel leadership style	+31	why does catalonia want independence	102	Mobile	7.11K	UK	1.86K		
		Rinaldi	+180	Fodor	619	ಗಾಂಧೀಜಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಜಾಪ್ರಭುತ್ವ (Gandhiji and Democracy)	+23	angela merkel leadership style	81	Tablet	255	India	1.57K		
October	1.19m	Asenbaum	+4.17K	Asenbaum	4.17K	is kamala harris black	+582	is kamala harris black	582	Desktop	9.96K	USA	6.6K		
		Vlasova	+483	Radford	1.33K	kamala harris ethnicity	+466	kamala harris ethnicity	466	Mobile	9.65K	UK	2.38K		
		Radpey	+269	Whiteley	1.03K	kamala harris race	+250	kamala harris race	250	Tablet	281	India	1.12K		
November	1.64m	Mihăilescu	+7.18K	Mihăilescu	7.18K	dark maga	+3.27K	dark maga	3.27K	Mobile	15.5K	USA	10.7K		
		Bialy	+325	Asenbaum	2.51K	what is dark maga	+1.18K	what is dark maga	1.18K	Desktop	12.5K	UK	3.3K		
		Trillo-Figueroa	+292	Radford	1.61K	dark maga meaning	+306	kamala harris ethnicity	331	Tablet	348	Canada	1.41K		
December	1.15m	Vlasova	+2.24K	Vlasova	2.82K	pyry6 (Rutube)	+260	dark maga	880	Desktop	9.49K	USA	5.95K		
		Korányi	+303	Mihăilescu	2.08K	Rutube	+115	what is dark maga	384	Mobile	11.2K	UK	2.31K		
		Mihăilescu	+257	Radford	1.16K	ukraine casualties vs russian casualties	+63	kamala harris ethnicity	293	Tablet	331	Russia	2.22K		



Google analytics



Clicks and page impressions

Our top-performing month was November, with 1.64 million impressions and 28,400 individual clicks. The former figure is a rise of over 50% on the same month in the previous year, and quadruple 2021. Monthly page impressions topped one million October, and remained above 1m for the rest of the year.

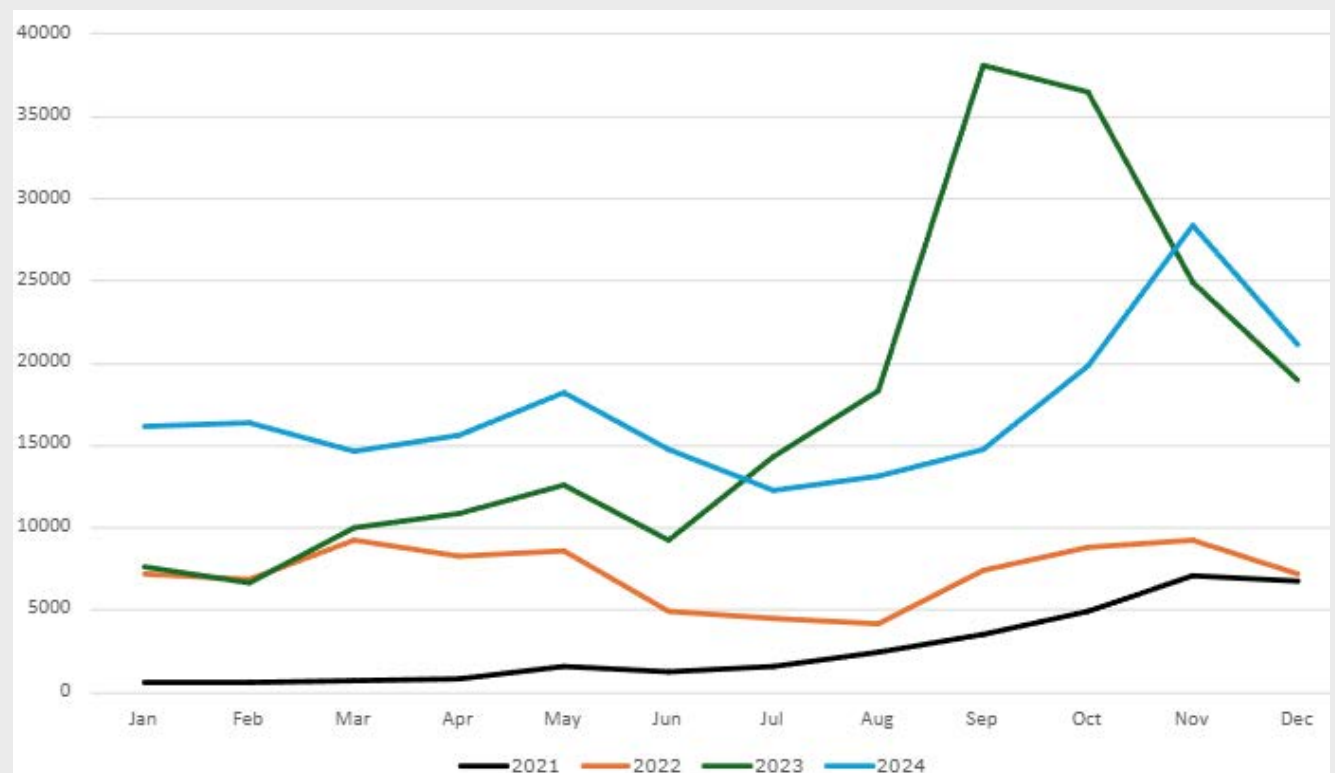


In 2024, for the first time, some months recorded slightly lower clicks and page impressions than the previous year. However, the publication in September 2023 of a piece on casualties in Ukraine proved a magnet for Russian spambots, which may well have artificially inflated the Q4 2023 figures.

From June–August 2024 (holiday season), and again in November, more readers accessed The Loop on a mobile device than they did on a desktop computer. It is interesting that there isn't a clear trend towards one or the other.

Clicks

How often someone clicked a link from Google to theloop.ecpr.eu





Google analytics



Search term analysis

In the first half of 2024, the widely accessed 2023 piece by Benjamin Radford and colleagues continued to dominate search terms, with phrases such as 'Ukraine casualties vs Russian casualties'. Albrecht Rothacher's popular piece [speculating on how the Russia-Ukraine war might end](#) was accessed by readers using variations on terms such as 'how will ukraine war end'.

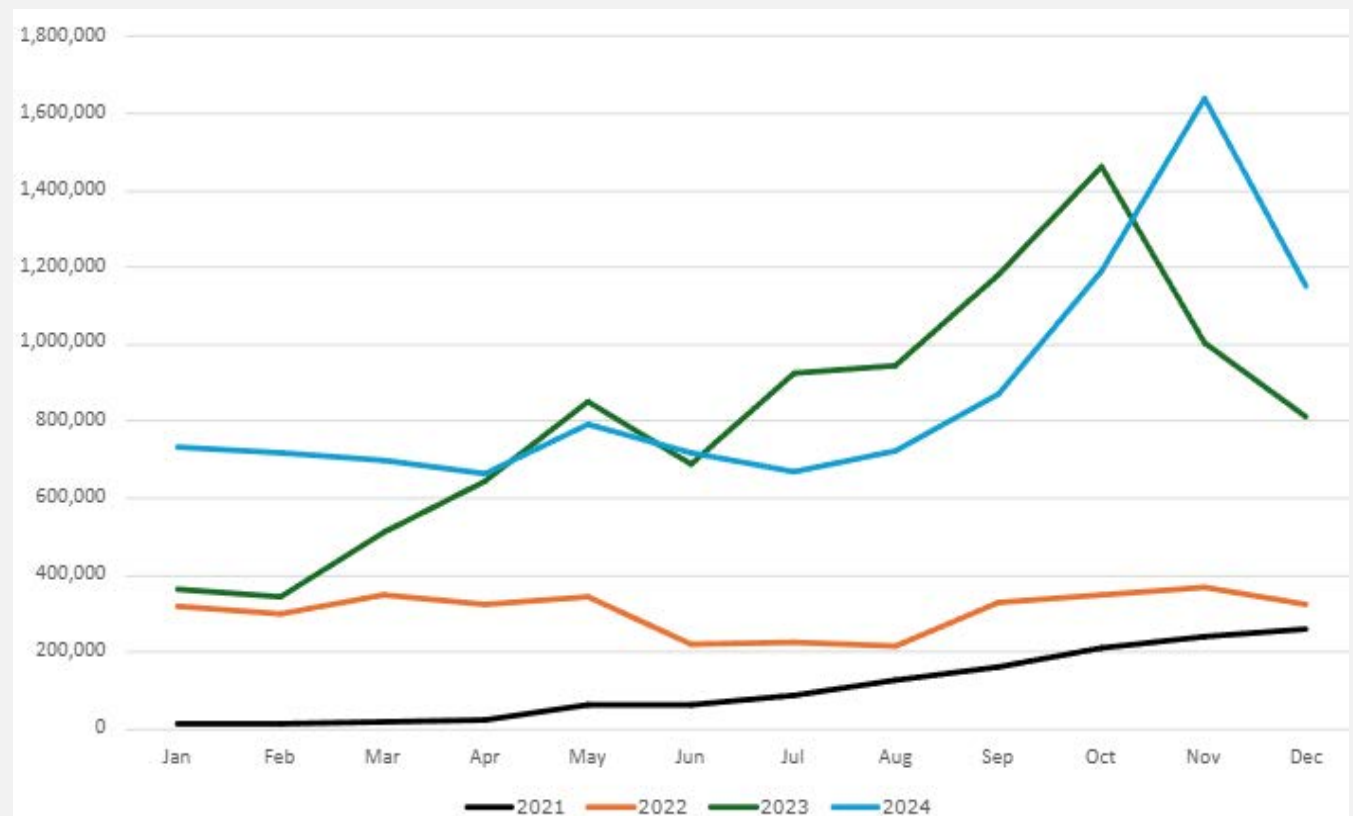
In the second half of the year, for the first time, we are seeing search terms in languages other than English, in particular for the Russian 'Rutube' (YouTube equivalent) which again points to troll farms and, sadly, suggests that figures may not be accurately representative of flesh-and-blood readers.

The top-performing search query, by some margin was 'Dark Maga' in response to Mimi Mihăilescu's piece in November on how [Dark Maga memes](#) are influencing belief systems. Depressingly, Hans Asenbaum's piece in his 🇺🇸 Democratic Transformations series also attracted huge numbers of troll accounts [disputing Harris' ethnicity](#).

For the first ten months of the year, the USA, UK and India were the top three countries, by clicks. In November, however, after we had published content on the US election, Canada takes up the third spot. In December, it is Russia, whose troll farms racked up almost as many clicks as legitimate readers in the UK: 2,200 versus 2,310. Even as late as December 2024, fifteen months after it was published, the Radford piece on war casualties was the third most 'read' blog piece in that month.

Page impressions

How often someone saw a link to theloop.ecpr.eu on Google





Author survey feedback



A Survey Monkey questionnaire captures contributors' experiences. The anonymous 1–2 minute survey comprises five questions, followed by a free-text box for additional comments, a selection of which are reproduced overleaf.

A weblink to complete the survey appears in the message authors receive when their blog is published. Between 1 January and 31 December we received 68 responses, considerably fewer than during the previous two years, which reflects the fact that a higher proportion of our authors are now returning contributors.

Response analysis

96% of contributors were either satisfied or very satisfied with the editing of their blog. No change from 2023.

A slightly lower proportion of authors – 91% – were satisfied or very satisfied with the speed of the editorial process, and 96% were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience, 1% down on the previous year.

Q1: How satisfied were you with the editing of your blog piece?

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean %
Very satisfied	81%	84%	84%	74%	81%
Satisfied	14%	15%	12%	22%	15.5%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		1%	1%		0.5%
Dissatisfied	4%		3%	1%	2%
Very dissatisfied	1%			3%	1%

ECPR comms such as the website and Digest are the most common routes to finding The Loop. Social media remains important. At 28%, the proportion of word-of-mouth recommendations is 3% up on 2023, and testament to the high regard in which we are held in academe. Only one respondent reported they would not work with us again.

Q2: How satisfied were you with the speed of the editorial and production process?

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean %
Very satisfied	80%	83%	79%	68%	77.5%
Satisfied	18%	15%	15%	24%	17.5%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2%	2%	5%	4%	3.25%
Dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%	4%	1.75%
Very dissatisfied					0%

Q3: How would you rate your overall experience?

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean %
Very satisfied	84%	84%	84%	75%	81.5%
Satisfied	11%	12%	13%	21%	14.25%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%	4%	2%		2.5%
Dissatisfied	1%		1%	4%	1.5%
Very dissatisfied	1%				0.25%

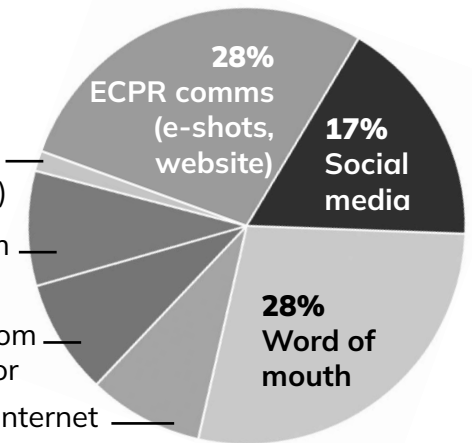
Q4: Where did you hear about The Loop?

1.5% Existing author (previously published)

8.5% Referral from ECPR journal

8.5% Referral from Loop series editor

8.5% Internet search



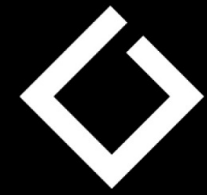
Q5: Would you publish with The Loop again?

99%
Yes

“

Many thanks to the editors (academic and managing) for their comments and efforts.

19 March



“

Excellent editorial work by fantastic colleagues!

29 April



I appreciated the efficiency of the process.

23 February



“

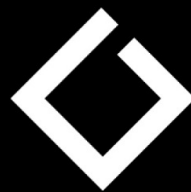
Really good and dedicated team. I am shocked that it was published that fast.

14 March

“

It's a brilliant (and stylish!) tool to promote our research

20 December



“

A very nice and caring experience – as opposed to many other blogs!

19 August



“

I liked that during the process I basically had contact with one person

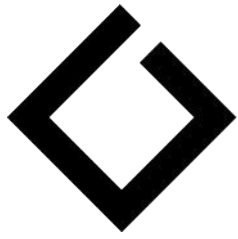
23 December



“

Found the Loop always very personable and friendly, which goes a long way

11 July



Email feedback from authors



Temidayo Eseonu 5 March

■ Thank you for the editing! It reads much better with the change in tone.



Mahmoud Javadi 23 May

■ Thank you very much for your fantastic work on my article and preparing it for release in the best possible way.



Loqman Radpey 3 August

■ Thank you very much for working on the piece. Thanks to your comments, it is now more readable, thought-provoking, and informative.



Veronica Anghel 23 April

■ Thank you for editing the piece and making it look better!



James F. Downes 28 May

■ Thank you very much for the editing work...the blog post looks perfect to me.



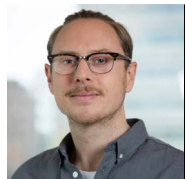
Priscyll Anctil Avoine 20 August

■ Thank you, we had a super-nice experience!



Marzia Saramad 24 April

■ Thank you so much for the update and everything during this process. Your help and support are greatly appreciated!



Jason Tucker 19 June

■ Thanks a million for your help... It reads much better now. I very much appreciate your input.



Polina Zavershinskaia 19 September

■ Thank you very much for your amazing editing!



Michal Grahn 14 May

■ Many thanks for this quick and smooth process.



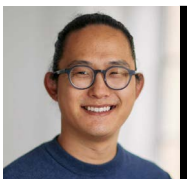
Henrik Skaug Sætra 24 June

■ Thank you very much for the swift process and kind comments.



Olga Vlasova 2 October

■ Thank you so much for all your effort and help 🌸. You are the best!



William Allen 21 May

■ Thanks for all your team's support and patience – we'll definitely consider The Loop for future blog content!



Monika Meislova 27 June

■ Thank you very much for inviting me to contribute to the blog and for all your invaluable help throughout the process. I truly appreciate it beyond words.



Mimi Mihăilescu 2 October

■ Thank you very much for the edits! They were extremely helpful! It is quite difficult to be so concise when you have so much to say!

“

Thank you for your amazing editorial work!

@ElisaBelleBruni, 2 August

“

It's been fantastic to collaborate with the @ECPR_TheLoop. Your trust and support have been invaluable.

@Zulianello_M, 3 November



Delighted to see my blog article longlisted among 13 best blog pieces in 2023.

@AleksandraSpal3, 11 September

“

We started as a Joint Sessions Workshop ... So @ECPR_TheLoop was the natural place for this reflection.

@OzlemTurkTerzi, 1 October

Glad and honoured to see my blog piece on the Best Blog 2023 longlist.

@FSantsRaquel, 30 September

“

It was an honor to be on this year's best blog prize jury! @ECPR_TheLoop cultivated some really excellent pieces!

@DMPullan, 11 September





Headline statistics, 2024

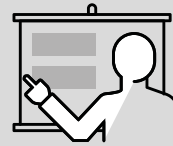
99%

authors would publish with The Loop again



217

published articles



50.5%

of authors are early career scholars



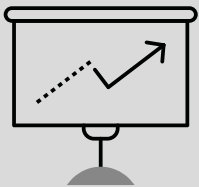
36

number of countries in which Loop authors were based



301

published authors

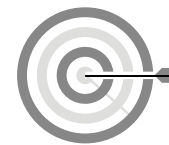


10.57 million

page impressions

1,746

followers on BlueSky at 31 December 2024 (and 5.1K on X)



46%

female authors



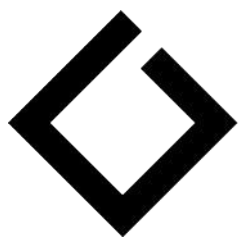
7,265

page views of our most-read 2024 blog piece at 14 January 2025

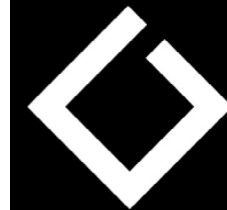


65.5%

authors from ECPR member institutions



Looking ahead



Coming soon on our series threads

In spring 2025, we launch a series from the [REDIRECT](#) research project, investigating changes in representative democracy in Europe: the 'representative disconnect'. Two series earmarked for 2024 remain in development, but we hope to move into production this year. Mahmoud Javadi has delivered his foundational blog piece on the ☢ Nuclear Politics Paradox. Also in the early stages of development is a series on 🤖 Artificial Intelligence and Power, edited by Inga Ulnicane.

At the time of writing, we are receiving contributions for the 🌈 [Gendering Democracy](#) series to mark International Women's Day 2025, following the success of [last year's IWD collection](#). Our prolific series on the 🦋 [Science of Democracy](#) and the 🗳 [Future of Populism](#) both generated spin-off book publications slated for a 2025 launch. Series lead Jean-Paul Gagnon has a title forthcoming with UCL Press to which Loop Editors Martin and Johanne have contributed. And Petra Guasti and Mattia Zulianello edited [Capire il Populismo \(Understanding Populism\)](#), a collection of essays – many by contributors to their Loop series – which debunks common myths about populism.

Towards a gender balance

In a drive to achieve gender parity among our contributors, Kate and Charlie have instigated an experiment to publish a monthly gender quota and carry over any remaining male authors to the following month. We have agreed with Martin and Johanne to assess the situation in April 2025, but if our experiment proves successful, we should have achieved full gender parity

for 2025. This system allows us to flag up gender deficits on a more regular basis, ensuring the Academic Eds are aware when they need to commission to make up the shortfall.

New and forthcoming initiatives

- Later in 2025, we plan to post selected Loop articles on ECPR's LinkedIn account, to see how they perform.
- Charlie is monitoring newsletters from *The Conversation*, *Good Authority*, and *Politico*, among others, with the aim of identifying areas of research on which we lack content.
- We will commission development work to include Altmetrics sidebar display, and to activate the dormant skyscraper adverts to enable cross-promotion with other ECPR activity.
- We plan to initiate pitch sessions for Standing Groups at the Thessaloniki General Conference. This is part of a wider initiative to strengthen ties with ECPR's Groups and Networks.
- We also plan to run an online workshop for female aspiring bloggers. We could make this an annual or bi-annual event.



Through 2025, the production team is operating a monthly gender quota system, to achieve full parity by the end of the year



Five-year plan

Kate has drawn up a five-year plan for The Loop's growth and development. ***The plan contains eight key goals, broken down into year-end targets. It also underlines the benefits to ECPR of achieving those goals, and identifies potential obstacles in the way of realising them. Our eight goals:***

- Continue to drive up readership figures
- Increase the percentage of published content pertaining to real-world political developments
- Explore means to generate revenue
- Design and develop training courses
- Reconfigure editorial team in preparation for new 2026 cohort
- Broaden author pool to include more contributors outside the academy
- Achieve gender parity among our published authors
- Strengthen ties with similar political science blog sites and forge links with political science associations around the world.