

PRESS RELEASE

## Generational Gap in The European Parliament, According to BCW and VoteWatch Europe's Influence Index

BRUSSELS, 28 October 2021 -- There is a generational shift in how MEPs cultivate influence, according to the 2021 BCW and VoteWatch Europe Influence Index, published today. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) over 60 hold more political power than their younger counterparts, but MEPs under 39 are most likely to use social media to shape the policy agenda.

The [Influence Index](#), now in its second edition, is [BCW Brussels](#) and [VoteWatch Europe's](#) data-driven ranking of MEPs based on two independent dimensions of influence:

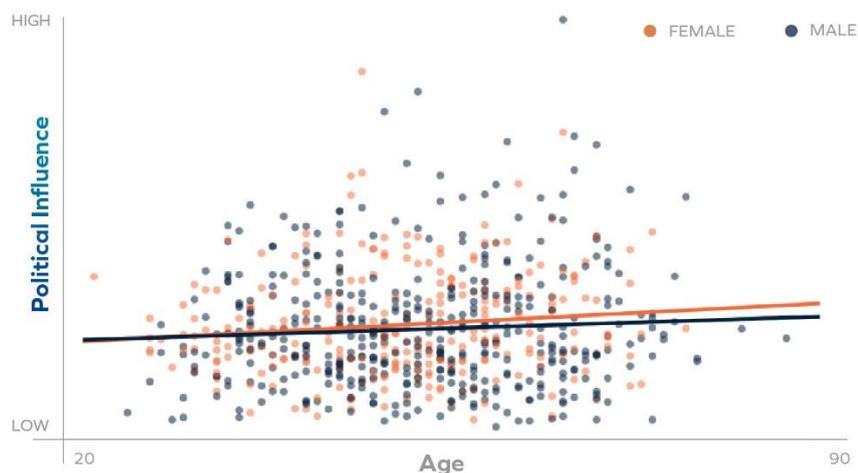
- **Political influence:** the ability to impact legislation, win votes and shape debates; and
- **Social influence:** the ability to reach people, shift the public conversation and build a community of support on social media

A full analysis of the data will be available on October 28 at [www.influenceindex.eu](http://www.influenceindex.eu), and the findings will be debated [live from the European Parliament](#) on Thursday October 28, 9.30-10.30 CET, with a panel featuring MEP Heidi Hautala, Vice-President of the European Parliament and MEP Sara Cerdas, Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer.

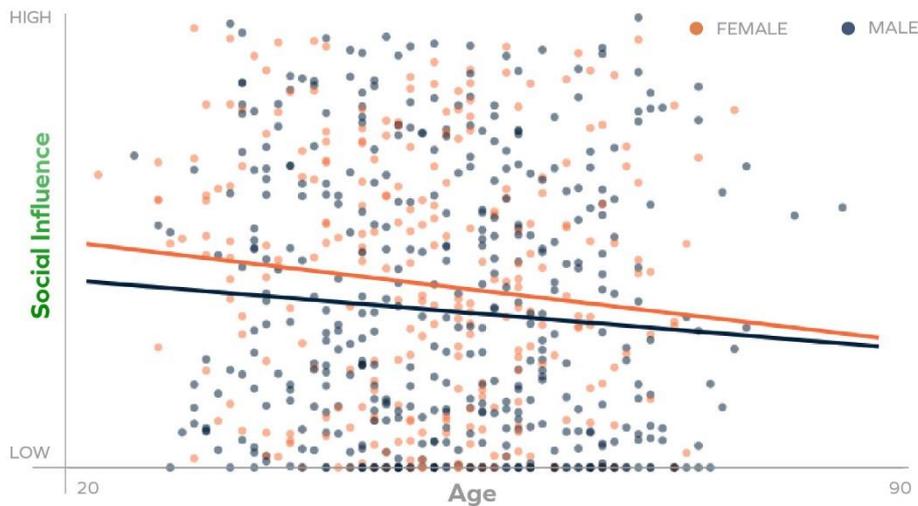
The 2021 [Influence Index](#) finds that MEPs over 60 have an average political influence score higher than their peers, with the gap widening on Europe's digital and trade policies. In contrast, younger MEPs score much higher for social media influence across all policy areas, suggesting a digital generational gap.

### MEPs' Influence by Age and Gender

#### MEPs' POLITICAL INFLUENCE BY AGE AND GENDER ALL POLICIES



## MEPs' SOCIAL INFLUENCE BY AGE AND GENDER ALL POLICIES



"With its 'first-of-its-kind' combination of political insight and BCW's proprietary social media analysis, the [Influence Index](#) sheds new light on dynamics of political influence in the European Parliament," said Andrew Cecil, CEO of BCW Brussels. "Tenure and age still matter for raw political power, but the younger generation is fast catching up, wielding influence through its adoption of social media. This is particularly important in policy areas that matter for Europe's next generation of voters, such as the green and health policy."

"As the pandemic has accelerated the shift to digital communications, the Influence Index is an essential tool for anyone looking to understand which MEPs are shaping the policy agenda across Europe," said Doru Frantescu, VoteWatch Europe's CEO.

The 2021 Influence Index also found that:

- Despite being under-represented in the European Parliament, **female MEPs** are on average more influential than their male counterparts;
- However, only **two women** make it to the top 10 of the most politically influential MEPs while **four women** rank among the top 10 most socially influential;
- **German MEPs** score highest for political influence, while **French MEPs** score highest for social influence;
- **Hungarian MEPs** drop most points for political influence since 2020, maybe linked to Fidesz's departure from the EPP political party; and
- MEPs from **Germany** and the **Czech Republic** gain most social influence, with increased political campaigning in these countries ahead of their national elections in Autumn 2021.

The 2021 Influence Index shows shifts in the over the past 12 months rankings, with the EPP's Manfred Weber edging European Parliament President David Sassoli to the top spot for

combined political and social influence. The top 100 most influential MEPs can be found at [www.influenceindex.eu](http://www.influenceindex.eu).

## Most Influential MEPs – 2021

	Political Influence		Social Influence		Combined Political and Social Influence	
1	<b>David-Maria SASSOLI</b> ITALY S&D	100.00	<b>Reinhard BÜTIKOFER</b> GERMANY Greens/EFA	100.00	<b>Manfred WEBER</b> GERMANY EPP	85.80
2	<b>Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ</b> SPAIN S&D	87.61	<b>Michael BLOSS</b> GERMANY Greens/EFA	98.63	<b>Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ</b> SPAIN S&D	82.34
3	<b>Dacian CIOLOȘ</b> ROMANIA Renew	82.82	<b>Manon AUBRY</b> FRANCE The Left	97.64	<b>Sven GIEGOLD</b> GERMANY Greens/EFA	79.96
4	<b>Manfred WEBER</b> GERMANY EPP	78.03	<b>Manuel BOMPARD</b> FRANCE The Left	96.61	<b>Dacian CIOLOȘ</b> ROMANIA Renew	78.99
5	<b>Heidi HAUTALA</b> FINLAND Greens/EFA	73.10	<b>Pascal CANFIN</b> FRANCE Renew	95.73	<b>David-Maria SASSOLI</b> ITALY S&D	78.05
6	<b>Johan VAN OVERTVELDT</b> BELGIUM ECR	72.18	<b>Raphaël GLUCKSMANN</b> FRANCE S&D	95.43	<b>Pascal CANFIN</b> FRANCE Renew	75.42
7	<b>Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR</b> SPAIN S&D	70.85	<b>Marie TOUSSAINT</b> FRANCE Greens/EFA	95.34	<b>Luis GARICANO</b> SPAIN Renew	75.17
8	<b>Antonio TAJANI</b> ITALY EPP	70.14	<b>Michèle RIVASI</b> FRANCE Greens/EFA	95.09	<b>Bernd LANGE</b> GERMANY S&D	75.05
9	<b>Sven GIEGOLD</b> GERMANY Greens/EFA	65.70	<b>Karen MELCHIOR</b> DENMARK Renew	94.80	<b>Antonio TAJANI</b> ITALY EPP	74.64
10	<b>Dimitrios PAPADIMOULIS</b> GREECE The Left	64.08	<b>Anna CAVAZZINI</b> GERMANY Greens/EFA	94.45	<b>Heidi HAUTALA</b> FINLAND Greens/EFA	74.62

A full analysis of the data can be found at [www.influenceindex.eu](http://www.influenceindex.eu), and an in-depth analysis of political influence can be found on the VoteWatch website.

-ENDS-

#### Media contacts

- Mared Jones (BCW) - [Mared.Jones@bcw-global.com](mailto:Mared.Jones@bcw-global.com) - +32492230372
- Davide Ferrari (VoteWatch) - [Davide.Ferrari@votewatch.eu](mailto:Davide.Ferrari@votewatch.eu) - +3223181188

#### About the Influence Index

The Influence Index is the data-driven ranking of MEPs by BCW Brussels and VoteWatch Europe. It is the first such ranking to measure influence through the two dimensions of:

- **Political influence:** the ability to change legislation, win votes and shape debates; and
- **Social influence:** the ability to reach people, shift the public conversation and build a community of support

More information, including a detailed description of the methodology, is available on [our website](#).

#### About BCW

BCW, a leading global communications agency, is in the business of moving people on behalf of clients. BCW partners with clients in the B2B, consumer, corporate, crisis management, healthcare, public affairs, purpose and technology sectors to set strategic direction for all communications and create powerful and unexpected ideas that earn attention. Through an “Earned-Plus” offer - earned media plus paid media, creative technology, data, AI and an expanding suite of innovative capabilities - BCW moves people with power and precision to move its clients forward. BCW is a part of WPP (NYSE: WPP), a creative transformation company. For more information, visit [www.bcw-global.com](http://www.bcw-global.com).

#### About VoteWatch

VoteWatch Europe is a leading Brussels-based independent organisation specialised in combining large data sets of EU political data with cutting-edge expertise in order to provide the best insights into EU politics.

Independent studies ranked VoteWatch Europe as the top influencer in the category of think tanks communicating on EU affairs.