



# Why has Donald Trump done much better than Europeans expected — again?

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**As was the case four years ago, most media outlets in Europe have been predicting a massive victory for the Democrats.**

Now the election results are much tighter than expected. Why?

Well, among lots of Europeans it was the wish for an overwhelming victory for Joe Biden that shaped the narrative. The majority of western Europeans are anti-Trump and pro-Biden. Reports in the European media are therefore incredibly one-sided — almost exclusively supportive of Biden and against Trump.

At the same time, a minority of western Europeans do support Trump, perhaps because everyone else is against him. When it comes to Donald Trump, there is hardly any middle ground: people are either 100 per cent against him and view him as the devil incarnate, or they are 100 per cent for him and consider him a genius.

I have been closely observing Trump for many years now. During the 2016 election campaign, I spent two months in the US; I also read all of the major Trump biographies. And there are two channels I make sure I watch every day: Fox News and CNN.

So I can understand Americans who voted for Trump. And I can also understand those who are against him. Here is my attempt at a more nuanced assessment of four years of the disruptor President.

## **What did Trump get right?**

Trump has had some triumphs, especially in terms of economic and tax policy. Instead of creating a mountain of red tape and regulation, as was the case under President Obama, Trump has tended to focus on deregulation and abolishing superfluous regulations. He has also significantly reduced taxes.

Both of these have been extremely positive for the US economy. Unemployment has fallen dramatically (or at least it had until the onset of the coronavirus crisis), and stock markets have boomed.

Something else I have always admired about Trump is that he simply doesn't care about political correctness. A massive threat to freedom, the political correctness trend is even more widespread in the US than it is in Europe, so it is liberating when someone throws the PC rulebook out of the

window. Trump's predecessor Obama appeared to prioritise issues such as transgender toilets and even issued a crawling apology after complimenting a female prosecutor on her looks, a comment that sparked outrage among the PC-crowd.

Many Americans were — like me — annoyed by the political correctness movement, and Trump has benefited from their exasperation.

Trump is also a champion of “law and order”, and repeatedly raised the issue of left-wing violence, with a particular focus on the Antifa movement. In contrast, the Democrats have remained silent. Anyone who reads the media in Europe does not have an adequate picture of the extent of left-wing violence in the United States. And Trump resolutely opposed the crazy calls heard over the summer to “defund the police.”

Finally, while Trump may not have built his wall, illegal immigration has declined significantly during his first term. These are all things I like about the President — and why so many US voters remained loyal to him.

### **What did Trump get wrong?**

As a matter of principle, I don't like people who lie. Some of Trump's supporters excuse his lies by saying that all politicians are creative with the truth from time to time. But you'd be hard-pressed to find another politician who lies as often and as brazenly as Trump.

I also can't stand people who constantly talk about things they don't know anything about. Trump has repeatedly claimed to know more about everything in the world than anyone else. A person who does not know what he knows and what he does not know — and who doesn't know the limits of his knowledge — will make a lot of mistakes that could have been avoided.

When you read the comments Trump has made about Covid-19 since February, for example, you have no option but to shake your head in utter disbelief. The fact that most European politicians have also been guilty of making massive mistakes at every stage of the coronavirus pandemic does not detract in any way from Trump's failures.

But what galls me most about Trump is his sympathy for dictators. His most affectionate remarks are always reserved for autocrats and dictators, for Putin, Erdogan and Kim Jong-Un. I have no objection to the fact that he has held talks with North Korea's leader, but the fact remains that he has failed in his policy towards the Hermit Kingdom, just like his predecessors. Trump even praised the inhumane dictator Kim in the highest possible terms, which was not only gratuitous but also unworthy of an American President.

Finally, when it comes to economic and tax policy, as I mentioned above, Trump did get some things right. However, even that is only half the truth: he has added to what was already a massive national debt mountain. And he has pursued protectionist policies that limit free trade — something that should alarm anyone who believes in markets and globalisation.

Due to all the above justified criticism of Trump, I can fully understand Americans who chose not to vote for him. But I can also understand every one of the many voters who did. Biden would not only pursue the mistaken policies enacted by Barack Obama, under whom he served as vice president. He would also implement elements of the leftist agenda advocated by politicians such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

Whatever the final result, America will not have a good President for the next four years. I sincerely hope that the US is someday able to find its next Ronald Reagan.