

The Radical Left Coalition (SYRIZA) led by Alexis Tsipras wins the General Election in Greece

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Results

Abstract:

Outgoing Prime Minister and leader of the Radical Left Coalition (SYRIZA), Alexis Tsipras, won his wager and the snap election that took place in Greece on 20th September. SYRIZA took 35.46% of the vote and 145 seats i.e. 4 less in comparison with the previous election on 25th January 2015. He drew ahead of New Democracy (ND) led by Evangelos Meimarakis which won 28.10% of the vote and 75 seats (-1). Golden Dawn (XA), a far right party led by Nikolaos Michaloliakos, retained its third place with 6.99% of the vote and 18 seats (+1).

The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) led by Fofi Gennimata won 6.23% of the vote and 17 seats (+5); the Communist Party (KKE), led by Dimitris Koutsoumbas, won 5.55% of the vote and 15 seats (=). To Potami (The River), a centrist party led by Stavros Theodorakis, campaigned on the fact that it had not participated in any government so far was on the decline with 4.09% of the vote and 11 seats (-6). The Independent Greeks (ANEL), a populist right-wing party- a member of the outgoing government coalition led by Panos Kammenos which was not forecast by many polls to rise beyond the 3% threshold to be able to stay in government won 3.63% of the vote and 10 seats (-3). The Centrist Union (EK) led by Vassilis Leventis won 3.49% of the vote and will be making its debut in the Vouli – the only chamber of parliament (9 seats).

However Popular Unity (Laiki Enotita, LE), a party formed on 21st August by 25 SYRIZA members who were opposed to the austerity policy and who split from the main party, led by former Restructuring, Production, Environment and Energy Minister (January to July 2015), Panayotis Lafazanis did not succeed in attracting those disappointed by Alexis Tsipras. It won 2.86% of the vote. "We lost the battle but not the war," stressed Panayotis Lafazanis. This might be, but the Greeks clearly indicated that they did not want to start new negotiations or see a stand-off with the country's creditors.

Turnout was very low in this election in a country in which it is normally obligatory to vote. Just over half of the Greeks turned out to ballot: 56.14%, i.e 7.73 points less in comparison with the election on 25th January 2015.

General election results 20th September 2015 in Greece

Turnout: 56.14% (it is obligatory to vote)

Political Parties	No. of votes won	% of votes won	No of seats
Radical Left Coalition (SYRIZA)	1 925 572	35,46	145
New Democracy (ND)	1 625 849	28,10	75
Golden Dawn (XA)	379 541	6,99	18
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	341 312	6,29	17
Communist Party (KKE)	301 543	5,55	15
To Potami (La rivi�re)	222 101	4,09	11
Independent Greeks Party (ANEL)	200 373	3,63	10
Centrist Union (EK)	186 423	3,49	9
Popular Unity (LE)	155 204	2,86	0
Others	92 816	3,55	0

Source : <http://ekloges.ypes.gr/current/v/public/index.html#  cls  main  ,  params  :    >

"The Greeks are going to elect a combative government which will continue with the same determination, the same sense of sacrifice, to do battle in defence of our people's rights, to take our future in hand and transit towards a new era," declared Alexis Tsipras as he went to vote. "A path of hard work and battle is opening up before us," he tweeted as the results were announced. Finally he said during the electoral evening – "tomorrow we shall roll up our sleeves and start some hard work."

The outgoing Prime Minister therefore retains office. Although he might now have shaken off the challengers to his policy within SYRIZA his parliamentary majority will be fragile. He has decided to continue the coalition with the Independent Greeks (ANEL). "Together we shall continue the battle that we started 7 months ago," he declared during a meeting alongside Panos Kammemos on election evening. "On Monday we shall form a new government coalition with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to bring Greece out of the recession and unemployment," confirmed the nationalist leader.

Visibly Alexis Tsipras has convinced some of the Greeks that he was best placed to introduce, the reforms demanded by the international organisations

fairly and in a social manner, in exchange for a third rescue plan signed on 13th July last. "We shall use each window of opportunity to lighten the effects of this memorandum," repeated Yiannis Burnous, SYRIZA's international relations manager.

Undoubtedly the Greeks appreciated the fact that the outgoing Prime Minister had done everything in his power to resist the country's creditors and with that he gave them back a little of their dignity. Indeed Alexis Tsipras achieved a three-year rescue plan (initially planned for 5 months) and helped to "move Europe" as he is fond of saying.

Alexis Tsipras still embodies the break with the old Greek political classes, which were once again rejected by the electorate. "The Greeks do not want the old corrupt political class and the present opposition does not represent an alternative path," indicated Giorgos Contogeorgis, professor of Political Science. "*Alexis Tsipras still enjoys the sentimental image of being a "good boy" who is doing what he can in a difficult situation. And above all, he has no credible challenger. He is still a "new man",*" confirmed Georges Sefertzis, a political analyst. His fellow countrymen therefore decided to grant the head of government the time he has requested to govern.

However *"Alexis Tsipras, who spent so many years fighting austerity might find himself in the position of the fifth Greek Prime Minister obliged to impose austerity measures,"* maintains Georges Sefertzis. *"The electorate voted for a party that relinquished its promises, changed policy and caused the collapse of the Greek banks, which led to a pointless recession,"* declared Stathis Kalyvas, a professor of Political Science at the University of Yale who added, *"the government will now have to implement a series of fiscal and structural reforms that previously it had vigorously rejected"*

41 year-old Alexis Tsipras, who originates from Athens, is a graduate in civil engineering from the Polytechnic University of Athens (UPNA). For several years he worked as such in the building industry. As a young man he joined the Communist Youth (KNE) and was active in several student movements. He was part of the reform movement that broke from the Communist Party at the end of the 1980's and in 1999 he became the first political secretary of the party's youth section (Neolaia Syn), a post he held until 2003.

Elected as a town councillor of Athens in October 2006 Alexis Tsipras became the chairman of Synaspismos (a former far left-wing party) two years later and the following year he entered the Vouli. He was re-elected

in the general elections of 6th May 2012 when the Radical Far Left (of which he became the Chairman of 22nd May) registered the highest score in its history, with 16.78% of the vote and 52 seats (26.9% of the vote and 71 seats on 17th June). The party won the general elections on 25th January 2015 and Alexis Tsipras became the first head of government from the radical left in Europe.

He never wears a tie and unlike his predecessors he was sworn in according to his conscience rather than the Holy Trinity and retains his post as head of government for the next four years.

The future Greek government has little or barely any room to manoeuvre. The text signed on 13th July by Athens and its European partners in effect grants Greece a third rescue plan totalling 86 billion euro over three years – after those in 2010 and 2012 – in exchange for structural reform and further austerity measures: VAT increases, reduction in the minimum pension from 450 to 382€ monthly (to be received only after 67 years of age), liberalisation of several markets and the creation of a privatisation fund supervised by the international creditors to release 50 billion € in revenues by March 2016. Alexis Tsipras now has to respect his commitments and implement the reforms promised.

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