

Mariano Rajoy's People's Party emerges strengthened after the parliamentary elections in Spain.

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Results

The People's Party (PP) led by the President of the outgoing government Mariano Rajoy came out ahead in the parliamentary elections that took place on 26th June in Spain. It won 33% of the vote and 137 seats (+14 in comparison with the previous election on 20th December last) in the Congreso, the lower chamber of parliament. It came out ahead of the Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) led by Pedro Sanchez who, contrary to forecasts by the pre-election polls, remained the country's second most important party winning 22.66% of the vote, the second lowest score in its history, and 85 seats (- 5). Unidos Podemos, the alliance of Podemos, led by Pablo Iglesias, and the United Left (Izquierda Unida, IU), led by Alberto Garzon, won 21.26% of the vote and 71 seats. Both parties won 24.40% of the vote together on 20th December last and 71 seats. Finally Ciudadanos (C's) led by Alberto Rivera won 13% of the vote and 32 seats (- 8).

The two new political parties in Spain are finally the losers in this election.

Turnout was one of the lowest ever recorded: 69.84% of the electorate turned out to vote.

"The vote is fragmented. Each party has strengthened its identity with the electorate as they have set down red lines. The result has been that

each has stuck to its position and the system has become paralysed," indicated Enrique Gil Cavo, a political analyst. "The Spanish have to get used to the idea that historic bipartism has had its time. We are now established in a four party situation for a long time to come and we shall have to make do with this, otherwise we shall be condemned to chronic instability," declared José Juan Toharia, a sociologist.

Parliamentary election results 26th June 2016 in Spain

Congress of Deputies

Turnout: 69,84%

Political parties	Number of votes won	% of votes cast	Number of seats
People's Party (PP)	7 906 185	33,28	137
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	5 424 709	22,83	85
Podemos (P)	5 049 734	21,26	71
Ciudadanos (C's)	3 123 769	13,15	32
Others	2 252 277	9,48	25

Senate

Partis politiques	Number of seats
People's Party (PP)	130
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	43
Podemos (P)	12
Ciudadanos (C's)	0
Others	23

Source : Home Affairs Ministry

<http://resultados2016.infoelecciones.es/99CO/DCO99999TO.htm?lang=es>

<http://resultados2016.infoelecciones.es/99SE/DSE99999TO.htm?lang=es>

The only party to have progressed is the People's Party (more than the Socialists) which benefited from a return of the electorate to the two main traditional parties in the country. The British vote in support of an exit from the EU led to the greatest fall in the Madrid stock market's history (-12%) and that of interest rates on the Spanish debt, and it certainly contributed to an increase in the feeling of uncertainty amongst the electorate who consequently turned less towards the new political parties. Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy warned his fellow Spaniards against "extremist or radical experiments" after the announcement of the result of the British referendum.

Although it will be legitimate in its bid to form a government the People's Party does not have an absolute majority (176) and does not have any real coalition partners. On several occasions the centre-right party Ciudadanos has said that it did not want to govern with Mariano Rajoy, a symbol of the corruption that has infected Spain. The party is also demanding a change to the electoral law that it deems biased towards the "big" parties if it is to take part in a government led by the People's Party. A People's Party-Ciudadanos alliance would not be enough however (7 votes short) and the two parties would have to find other allies to achieve an absolute majority.

The Socialists have maintained their position and their leader, Pedro Sanchez, might offer a strong left-wing coalition in terms of the Unidos Podemos. The sorpasso, or in other words for the far left taking the lead over the Socialist Workers' Party (as in Greece, where the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) has been supplanted by the United Leftwing Coalition (SYRIZA)) did not take place in the end.

According to the polls the Socialist voters are divided over the issue of possible alliances of their party with that of Pablo Iglesias. "Within the PSOE, there are an increasing number of people who are against Podemos," said Pablo Simon, a professor in Political Science at the University Carlos III of Madrid. Pablo Iglesias indicated that he wanted to form a government with the socialists whom he qualifies as "old school social democracy". "Podemos will govern Spain sooner or later," he declared.

The parliamentary elections of 26th June, like the previous ones on 20th December 2015 have not led to the emergence of any clear government majority. The progress made by the People's Party has however increased the total number of seats on the right (169) in comparison with those on the left (157), with the difference only being three in the outgoing Congress of Deputies.

Marian Rajoy has claimed the “right to govern”. Will he lead a minority and therefore weak government or will he succeed in forming a coalition this time and if so, with whom?

The new government will take office on 19th July next. “With the move over from two to four dominant parties, the new Parliament is more democratic but the inability to form alliances is accentuating citizens’ frustration, their weariness and the feeling that our political classes

are incompetent” indicated the Chairman of the pollster Metroscopia, José Juan Toharia. “We cannot go on to hold a third election. Whether they like it or not the parties will have to make alliances,” said Pablo Simon, a political analyst. “Voters admitted for the first time that the configuration is a unique one. But this time round they will not make any concessions. And international pressure will also be stronger,” he added.

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