

The Christian Social Party comes out ahead in the general elections in Luxembourg but is not sure to return to office

Corinne Deloy

Results

The Christian Social Party (PCS/CSV), the main opposition party led by Marc Spautz, came out ahead in the general elections on 14th October in Luxembourg. It won 28.1% of the vote and 21 of the 60 seats (-2 in comparison with the previous general elections on 2nd October 2013) in the House of Deputies, the only house in Parliament, i.e. its lowest score since 1974. Although it is still the country's leading political force, the party, in the opposition for the last four years, does not seem to have benefited as much as it had hoped since it was ousted from office.

The Socialist Workers' Party (POSL/LSAP), member of the outgoing government coalition and chaired by Claude Haagen came second with 17.6%, a result below the 20% mark – a first in its history – winning only 10 seats (-3), its lowest score since the Second World War. The Democratic Party (PD/DP) of outgoing Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, led by the outgoing Minister for the Family and Integration and the Greater Region, Corinna Cahen, won 16.91% of the vote and 12 seats (-1). The electoral boundaries explain the distribution of the results

The Greens/Dei Greng (LV-DG), member of the outgoing government coalition, has emerged as one of the winners in this election. With 15.12% of the vote and 9 seats (+3), the party has gained ground reaching this score for the first time in its history.

The Alternative Democratic Reform Party (ADR), a populist right-wing party led by Jean Schoos, which stood alongside Wee 2050, which was born of Nee 2015, a movement founded by Fred Keup in 2015 to counter the vote by foreign residents in

the general election put forward by the referendum on 7th June[1], is still gaining ground: the party won 8.28% and 4 seats (+1).

The Left/Dei Lenk (LG/DL), a far-left party recorded a slight increase, even though it failed to achieve its goal of winning an additional seat. It did not benefit as forecast from the decline of the Socialist Workers' Party taking only 5.48% and 2 seats (=).

Finally, the surprise in this election, the Pirate Party (PPLU), led by its founder Sven Clement made a noteworthy entry into parliament. Allied with the Party for Integral Democracy (PID), it won 6.45% of the vote and 2 seats.

Turnout was slightly inferior to that recorded in the election of 2nd October 2013 rising to 89.7%, i.e. 1.45 points less. It is obligatory to vote in Luxembourg, but for the first time this year Luxembourgers were allowed a postal vote without having to justify their absence on the day of voting. This explains why more than 40,200 voters registered to vote this way, i.e. 15.7% of the electorate (five years ago it lay at 7.6%).

1. On 7th June 2015 more than three-quarters of Luxembourgers (78.02%) voted against the vote for foreign non-Luxembourg voters in the general elections and 80.87% against bringing the legal voting age down to 16.

General Election Results – 14th October 2018 in Luxembourg

Turnout: 89.7% (it is obligatory to vote Luxembourg)

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won	No of seats
The People's Christian Social Party (PSC/CSV)	999 381	28.31	21
The Socialist Workers' Party (POSL/LSAP)	621 332	17.60	10
Democratic Party (PD/DP)	597 080	16.91	12
The Greens/Dei Greng (LV/DG)	533 893	15.12	9
Alternative Democratic Reform Party (ADR)	292 387	8.28	4
Pirate Party/Party for Integral Democracy (PPLU/PID)	227 549	6.45	2
The Left/Dei Lenk (LG/DL)	193 594	5.48	2
Communist Party (PCL/KPL)	44 916	1.27	0
Democracy (D)	10 320	0.29	0
The Conservatives (DK)	9 516	0.27	0

Source : <https://elections.public.lu/fr/elections-legislatives/2018/resultats.html>

"The trend is not towards euphoria. The major parties lost votes to the benefit of the small ones. And yet with The Greens/Dei Greng and the Democratic Party we worked well ... It is a shame that this has not gone together with a positive outcome in the ballot box" declared Francine Cloeser (POSL/LSAP), outgoing Secretary of State for the Economy, Domestic Security and Defence and Lydia Mutsch (POSL/LSAP) outgoing Minister for Healthcare and Equal Opportunities when the results were announced.

In Luxembourg, as elsewhere in Europe, the traditional parties, and notably those on the left, are struggling and have all recorded losses in the ballot boxes as the elections go by. However, the "small" parties, and to a lesser degree, the populist or radical parties are gaining ground.

The CSV emerges as the winner in the election but it is not in a strong position however. Already four years ago it was in this situation, a victim of a tripartite coalition which wanted to change Prime Minister (Jean-Claude Juncker for 18 years).

It might consider forming a government coalition with the Democratic Party (together they won 33

seats in Parliament). But the leader of the DP and outgoing Prime Minister would have to assume a junior partner role however.

It could also form a coalition with the LSAP as it did before 2013. They have just the number of seats to do this (31 out of 60).

The Greens/Dei Greng might be asked to join a coalition like this. The only party in the outgoing government coalition to record an increase in their number of votes, the ecologists have demanded participation in the next government via the outgoing Sustainable Development and Infrastructures Minister François Bausch (LV/DG).

"The Christian Social Party is by far the strongest in the Luxembourg political arena and I believe that it is clear and legitimate for us to ask to take part in the next government," declared Claude Wiseler, the CSV's candidate for the post of Prime Minister. "We are open to all discussion, without me being able to tell you in which direction it might go," he added.

However, the outgoing government coalition led by Xavier Bettel might just be able to regroup the latter with 31 seats out of 60. The democratic leader

stressed that "*the Luxembourg electorate sent a clear signal to continue the work we started five years ago.*" It is therefore possible that the outgoing government will return to office. In this event, given the results of each of the three parties, Xavier Bettel seems best placed to aspire to the post of Prime Minister and return to office as such.

The Grand Duke Henri has received the chairs of the different political parties on 15th October and has appointed an 'informateur' Martine Solovieff to determine the coalition that will form the next government.

You can read all of our publications on our site:
www.robert-schuman.eu

Publishing Director: Pascale JOANNIN

THE FONDATION ROBERT SCHUMAN, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.