

# The Socialist Workers' Party led by Pedro Sanchez ahead in Spain is due to stay in office

Corinne Deloy

## Results

*The Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), led by outgoing Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, won a clear victory in the parliamentary elections on 28th April in Spain – it was a snap election following the rejection of the country's budget by the Congress of Deputies, the lower house of the Spanish parliament (Cortes generales), on 13th February last. The PSOE won 28.68% of the vote and took 123 seats in the Congress of Deputies, i.e. +39 in comparison with the previous elections on 26th June 2016.*

The main opposition party, the People's Party (PP) led by Pablo Casado, collapsed: it won 16.70% of the vote and its number of seats in the Congress was halved (66) - -69 in comparison with 2016. The centrist party Ciudadanos led by Alberto Rivera came third with 15.85% and 57 seats (+ 25). *Undoubtedly* Ciudadanos attracted the most moderate voters of the People's Party, who are against the recent swing to the right by their party.

The Unidos Podemos alliance led by Pablo Iglesias won 14.31% of the vote and 42 seats (- 17). Finally, Vox (Voice in Latin), a populist right-wing party founded in 2013 after splitting from the People's Party, led by Santiago Abascal won 10.26% of the vote and 24 seats. 44 years after the death of the dictator Francisco Franco, the far-right has therefore made its return to the Spanish parliament. *"Polls forecast up to 35 or 40 seats, hence Vox's victory is mitigated somewhat"* declared Benoît Pellistrandi, a specialist in Spanish history.

The independence parties, and notably those on the left emerged strengthened in Catalonia. The Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) came out ahead

in the region with 24.59% (3.9% at national level) of the vote and 15 seats (+ 6). Junts per Catalunya (JxCat) won 12,05% (1.91% at national level) of the vote and 7 seats (- 1). In the Basque country, the Nationalist Party (EAJ/PNV) led by Andoni Ortuzar won 31% (1.52% at national level) of the vote and 6 seats (+ 1). Euskal Herria Bildu (Reunite the Basque Country, EH Bildu), a four-party alliance, whose spokesperson is Maddalen Iriarte, won 16,7% (0.99% at national level) of the vote and doubled its number of seats (4, + 2). The Canary Coalition-Canary Nationalist Party (CC-PNC), an alliance of a regionalist right-wing party led by Claudina Moraels and a regionalist party led by Juan Manuel Gracia Ramos, won 12.96 % (0.52% at national level) of the vote and 2 seats (+ .1). Navarra Suma (NA+) also won 2 seats (29.32% of the vote, 0.41% at national level)); the Compromise Coalition in Valenciana with 6,45 % (0.66% at national level)) and the Regionalist Party of Cantabria (PRC) with 14,59% (0,20% at national level) won 1 seat each.

Turnout was very high, reaching 75.75% i.e. +9.27 points in comparison with the parliamentary elections of 26th June 2016.

Parliamentary election results 28th April 2019 in Spain

**Congress of Deputies**

Turnout: 75.75%

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won	No of seats won
<b>Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)</b>	7 470 091	28,68	123
<b>People's Party (PP)</b>	4 348 246	16,70	66
<b>Ciudadanos (C's)</b>	4 129 119	15,85	57
<b>Unidos Podemos</b>	3 727 044	14,31	42
<b>Vox (V)</b>	2 672 587	10,26	24
<b>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)</b>	1 014 462	3,90	15
<b>Junts per Catalunya (JxCat)</b>	497 276	1,91	7
<b>Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ/PNV)</b>	394 627	1,52	6
<b>Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu)</b>	258 840	0,99	4
<b>Canary Coalition-Canary Nationalist Party (CC-PNC)</b>	136 115	0,52	2
<b>Navarra Suma (NA+)</b>	107 124	0,41	2
<b>Compromise Coalition</b>	172 167	0,66	1
<b>Regionalist Party of Cantabria (PRC)</b>	52 197	0,20	1
<b>Others</b>	11 914 081	4,09	0

Sources : <https://www.resultados.eleccionesgenerales19.es/Congreso/Total-nacional/0/es>

**Senate**

Turnout: 75.41%

Political Parties	No of seats	Difference in comparison with 2016
<b>Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)</b>	121	+78
<b>People's Party (PP)</b>	56	-74
<b>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)</b>	11	+1
<b>Basque Nationalist Party (EAJ/PNV)</b>	9	+4
<b>Ciudadanos (C's)</b>	4	+4
<b>Navarra Suma (NA+)</b>	3	+3
<b>Junts per Catalunya (JxCat)</b>	2	+2
<b>Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu)</b>	1	+1
<b>ASG</b>	1	-

Sources : <https://www.resultados.eleccionesgenerales19.es/Senado/Total-nacional/0/es>

Outgoing Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, declared that he hoped to form a “pro-European” government. “The Socialist Party won the elections and with this we have won the future and we have left the past behind,” he said. “We have shown that Spain is a big, strong democracy in which millions of people have voted to defend democracy and the future,” he added. The PSOE undeniably benefited on 28th April from the collapse of the right and the regression of the left-wing populists of Podemos. It also benefited from a large turnout.

Pedro Sanchez did not however win the absolute majority and will be obliged to find some partners to lead Spain. He might form a government coalition with Podemos, but the union of the two parties will not be enough. The Socialists will therefore have to find allies amongst the regionalist Basque and Catalan forces, something that Pedro Sanchez tried to avoid during the campaign when he repeated: “We are very close, victory is there, the question is whether it will be enough, because winning does not mean governing.” “A majority supported by the independentists would add tension and make matters highly unstable. The secessionists can approve the investiture, but they will not sign a blank cheque,” declared Ana Sofia Cardenal, professor of political science at the University Oberta de Catalunya (UOC).

Pedro Sanchez might also choose to ally himself with Ciudadanos. Together the two parties would hold an absolute majority of the seats in the Congress of Deputies. However, Alberto Rivera called during the electoral campaign to get rid of the outgoing Prime Minister: “Ciudadanos will never govern with Pedro Sanchez” he warned. The centrist leader accuses Pedro Sanchez of having made a “pact with the independentists”. On 18th February Ciudadanos voted on a measure indicating that it would not join forces with the PSOE after the elections on 28th April.

Moreover, a share of the socialist voters is also against an alliance with Ciudadanos. Pedro Sanchez heard them cry “Not with Rivera” on the announcement of the results, as they hailed his victory. “Pedro Sanchez must choose between the right and the left, between Ciudadanos and Podemos, and in my opinion in the

present political context he has no choice, and he has to join with Podemos,” indicated Alvaro Oleart, a political expert at the Free University of Brussels.

“We have to vote so that a stable government comes from the ballot,” repeated the leader of the People’s Party Pablo Casado over the last few weeks. The young leader undertook an electoral campaign that swung extremely to the right, as he hoped to attract those tempted by a vote for Vox. “60% of Vox’s potential electorate come from the People’s Party,” stressed José Pablo Ferrandiz, Deputy Chair of the pollster Metroscopia, ahead of the elections. “Pablo Casado faces an extremely complicated campaign. During the previous elections the People’s Party was certain to win the confessional, rural, traditionalist vote, but this is no longer the case,” indicated Cesar Calderon, a political analyst for the consultancy Redlines. The decline of the main opposition party has however made what some had hoped for impossible, i.e. a right-wing government rallying the People’s Party, Ciudadanos and Vox, as in Andalusia<sup>[1]</sup> to lead Spain.

Aged 47 and from Madrid, Pedro Sanchez is, amongst other things, a graduate in economy from the University Complutense of Madrid. He joined the PSOE very early and between 2004 and 2009 he was a town councillor of Madrid, before joining the Congress of Deputies on 15th September 2009, following the resignation of former Economy and Finance Minister Pedro Solbes (PSOE). On 12th July 2014 he was elected to everyone’s surprise with 48.73% of the vote as the leader of the Party, taking over from Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba.

After two failures in the parliamentary elections on 20th December 2015 and 26th June 2016, as well as in the regional elections on 15th September 2016 in the Basque Country and in Galicia Pedro Sanchez was forced to resign. He took back the party’s leadership on 21st May 2017.

Pedro Sanchez entered office on 1st June 2018 thanks to the vote by 180 against 169 in his favour, on a motion of no-confidence against the government led by Mariano Rajoy (PP), accused in a vast corruption affair (Gürtel) (belt in German, a play on words on the

1. After the regional elections on 2nd December last, the People’s Party formed a coalition with Ciudadanos and concluded an investiture agreement with Vox, thereby chasing the Socialists from the main stronghold.

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2. Members of the People's Party are said to have accepted bribes between 1999 and 2005 in exchange for their signature on major government contracts in several regions of Spain.

name of Francisco Correa, the main culprit in the affair) [2]. Since that date the PSOE has taken three flagship measures: the revaluing of pensions, a 22% increase in the minimum wage (rising from 740€ to 900€) and an increase in civil servants' wages. Pedro Sanchez's government, the most female in Spain's history (11 women and 6 men), also approved many measures to counter violence against women.

This election means that it is almost impossible for

the "major" government parties in Europe to lead a country alone. The partisan system focused on two major movements – social democrats on the one side and conservatives on the other – is eroding, making way for new, often populist forces.

The formation of the next Spanish government will take time because of the fragmentation of the parliament and also because of the (regional, local and European) elections that will be organised in Spain on 26th May next.

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