European Elections monitor

The Socialists in office won the general election in Portugal

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RESULTS

The Socialist Party (PS), led by outgoing Prime Minister Antonio Costa won the general election organised on 6th October in Portugal. It won 36.65% of the vote and took 106 of the 230 seats in the Assembly of the Republic, the only house of Parliament (+21, in comparison with the previous election on 4th October 2015).

The Social Democratic Party (PSD), led by Rui Rio came 2nd with 27.9% of the vote (77 seats). The Left Bloc (BE), a radical left-wing party, whose spokesperson is Catarina Martins, won 9.67% of the vote and 19 seats (=). The Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU) led by Jeronimo de Sousa won 6.46% of the vote and 12 seats (- 5). The Social Democratic Centre/People's Party (CDS/PP), a Christian-Democratic party led by Assunçao Crista, won 4.25% of the vote and 5 seats.

The party defending animals' rights and nature – People-Animals-Nature (PAN), led by André

Lourenço e Silva, won 3.28% of the vote and 4 seats (+3). *Chega* (which means "Enough", a right-wing populist party will be making its debut in the Assembly, as it won 1 seat, likewise two "small" parties, Liberal Initiative (IL) and LIVRE (L), a left-wing ecologist party which won one seat each.

The Portuguese electorate has taken refuge rather more in abstention than in contestation. Turnout was the lowest ever recorded: 54.5% i.e. 1.36 points less than in the general election on 4th October 2015.

"Portuguese democracy is typified by the resistance of the traditional parties," said Antonio Costa Pinto, professor of political science at the University of Lisbon. *"Immigration rates and cultural shocks are low and in Portugal there is a tendency to reject extremes and violence,"* stresses historian Antonio Araujo.

General election in Portugal
6th October 2019

Results of the general election on 6th October 2019 in Portugal

Turnout : 54,50%

Political parties	Number of votes obtained	Percentage of votes won	Number of seats
Socialist Party (PS)	1 866 407	36,65	106
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	1 420 553	27,90	77
Left Bloc (BE)	492 487	9,67	19
Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU)	329 117	6,46	12
Social Democratic Centre/People's Party (CDS/PP)	216 448	4,25	5
People-Animals-Nature (PAN)	166 854	3,28	4
Chega (Enough	66 442	1,30	1
Liberal Initiative (IL)	65 545	1,29	1
LIVRE (L)	55 656	1,09	1
Others	194 777	8,11	0

Source : https://www.legislativas2019.mai.gov.pt

"Stability is vital for Portugal's international credibility and to attract investors. The Socialist Party will endeavour to find solutions to guarantee this stability during its terms in office," declared Antonio Costa when the results were announced. *"Each vote counts and we have to have a strong Socialist Party to guarantee four more years of stability,"* warned the outgoing Prime Minister during the campaign, encouraging his fellow countrymen not to disperse and to provide their votes to the socialists to avoid a situation in which Spain now finds itself, with the obligation to return to vote (for the fourth time in under four years) on 10th November after Pedro Sanchez (Socialist Workers' Party PSOE) failed to form a government in the wake of the election on 28th April last. Although Antonio Costa won a clear victory, he did not manage to clinch an absolute majority and so he will have to find government partners or win the support of several parties to guarantee a parliamentary majority.

Mr Costa indicated during the campaign that he would not govern in coalition with the parties from the radical left i.e. the Left Bloc and the Unitarian Democratic Coalition. He is however prepared to renew the so-called *geringonça* alliance, a term used for an improvised measure, with these two left-wing parties,

thanks to which he was able to govern over the last four years.

"Antonio Costa has shown great skill as a negotiator, he has been able to get on with the President of the Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, former leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) (1996-1999). During his campaign, strengthened by his budgetary margin, the outgoing Prime Minister promised a further mandate marked by massive public investment," indicated António Jose Teixeira, analyst. *"Antonio Costa is a skilled negotiator, someone who is extremely pragmatic, a born politician,"* maintained Marina Costa Lobo, an analyst at the University of Lisbon. *"It has worked because he established an extremely strict working framework. The pact was very clear from the start. His allies on the left guaranteed the stability of his minority government and he committed to a social agenda to relieve the pressure caused by the austerity policies, but they accepted that he was free in terms of budgetary balance and in his negotiations with Brussels,"* stressed Antonio Costa Pinto, adding, *"it will be more difficult for Antonio Costa to make concessions on the left in an economic context which is not forecast to be so positive." "The Left Bloc is prepared to negotiate an agreement guaranteeing the*

country's stability," indicated Catarina Martins on the announcement of the results.

Aged 58 and from Lisbon Antonio Costa is a law and political science graduate from the University of Lisbon. For a time, he was a lawyer. He was elected to represent the PS in the general election on 6th October 1991. In 1997 he was appointed Minister for Parliamentary Affairs in a government led by Antonio Guterres (PS). Two years later he took charge the Ministry of Justice until 2002.

He became MEP in the election on 13th June 2004. A year later he integrated the government led by José Socrates (PS), as Interior Minister, a post from which he resigned two years later so that he could run for the mayor ship of Lisbon. He was appointed Mayor of the town on 1st August 2007 and was re-elected in 2009, then in 2013.

The following year Antonio Costa took over as leader of the PS. Although it only came second in the general election on 4th October 2015, the PS negotiated with the Left Bloc and the Unitarian Democratic Coalition with whom it adopted a government programme. On 24th November the President of the Republic Antonio Cavaco Silva (PSD) appointed Antonio Costa Prime Minister.

Undoubtedly Antonio Costa will be obliged to implement some structural reform to modernise certain sectors of the Portuguese economy, notably the civil service and the banks. He will also have to respond to social demands made by the Portuguese, notably those concerning low wages, the deterioration of public services and the increase in real estate prices, a result of the growth of Portugal's tourist trade.

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