

# The Belgians have proved the polls wrong: the New Flemish Alliance (NVA) is victorious in Flanders and the Mouvement Réformateur (MR) has won in Wallonia and Brussels

Contrary to what the opinion polls had predicted, it was the New Flemish Alliance (NVA) that emerged victorious from the 9 June general elections in Flanders. It won 16.71% of the vote and 24 seats, (-1), than in the previous general elections on 26 May 2019, and overtook the radical right-wing party Vlaams Belang (VB), which obtained 13.76% and 20 MPs (+2), the highest result in its history. "We won these elections. Admit it, you didn't expect that. The polls were not good. The death notices had already been written, but you never gave up. As a result, the NVA is the leading party in Flanders (...) Flanders has voted for autonomy more than before. Dear friends, we will have to take account of the Flemish people's choice. Flanders has settled its score with the Vivaldi government", declared party leader Bart De Wever.

Vlaams Belang leader Tom Van Grieken immediately reached out to the NVA. "Flanders has spoken clearly: Flanders wants a more right-wing, Flemish policy. So, dear Bart, don't squander this historic opportunity".

The NVA and the VB share a common ambition to divide Belgium, a measure written into their statutes. However, the NVA no longer uses the term separatism (only 10% of Flemings want the end of Belgium) but confederalism, a less radical and therefore less frightening word. However, if the VB were to join the NVA in the Flemish government, this could jeopardise an alliance between the NVA and the other French-speaking parties at federal level, while Bart De Wever would like to be Prime Minister of the country.

The Socialists of Vooruit (formerly the Flemish Socialist Party (SP.A)), led by Melissa Depraetere, came third in Flanders with 8.11% and 13 MPs (=), followed by the Christian Democrats (CD&V), who won 7.98%

and 11 seats (-1). The Liberals and Democrats (Open VLD) won 5.44% and 7 seats (-5), while the Groen environmentalists won 4.63% and 6 seats (-2).

Outgoing Prime Minister Alexander De Croo (Open VLD) congratulated "the winners of these elections, the NVA, Vlaams Belang and Vooruit. And our friends from the Mouvement Réformateur (MR) in the French-speaking part. For us, it was a particularly difficult evening, we lost". Tom Ongena, leader of the Open VLD, described his party's result as "sterile". "We always said that if we got under 10% of the vote, we wouldn't be able to influence politics. It is clear that we should not enter the majority". He announced his resignation as party leader.

The other surprise of the election was the strong performance of the Mouvement Réformateur (MR) in French-speaking Belgium. It won 10.28% of the vote and 20 seats (+ 6). It also outstripped the Socialist Party (PS), which lost 4 seats to 8.05% and 16 MPs. Socialist leader Paul Magnette admitted his disappointment with the result in Wallonia: "There is a trend towards an erosion of our results, which are not up to the level we had hoped for, and a clear growth of the right-wing and centre-right parties, an overall shift in the European landscape", he stressed.

Les Engagés (formerly the Centre démocrate humaniste (CDH)), led by Maxime Prévot, won 6.78% and 14 seats (=). Raoul Hedebow's Parti du Travail (PTB/PvdA) won 9.86% and 15 seats (=). Finally, Ecolo suffered a real setback: 2.93% and 3 seats (-10). Co-leaders Jean-Marc Nollet and Rajae Maouane resigned from their positions. "We didn't live up to expectations. Tonight, it has to be said that the ecologists are among those who lost the election," declared Jean-Marc Nollet.

## General election in Belgium

### 9nd June 2024

The MR is now the largest party in Brussels. In the capital, it overtook the PS, with the Parti du Travail hot on its heels. MR leader Georges-Louis Bouchez described his party's victory as a "historic moment". "This is the first time that the Liberals have come out ahead on their own in Brussels (...) The MR is in first place in Wallonia, with 30% of the vote. This victory should make us take responsibility. An electoral victory is not a gift, it's a responsibility (...) This evening,

the electoral results are clear, they show a desire for change and reform".

In Wallonia as in Brussels, the MR could form a government with the Engagés. The Socialists could opt for opposition.

Turnout was the lowest ever recorded in Belgium, at 87.42%. Voting is compulsory, although there are no longer any penalties for breaking the law.

#### Results of the general elections of 9 June 2024 in Belgium

Turnout : 87.42 % (obligatory vote)

Political Parties	Number of votes won	% of votes won	Number of seats
<b>New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)</b>	1 165 963	16,71	24
<b>Vlaams Belang (VB)</b>	960 281	13,76	20
<b>Reform Movement (MR)</b>	716 934	10,28	20
<b>Socialist Party (PS)</b>	561 602	8,05	16
<b>Labour Party (PTB/PvdA)</b>	687 899	9,86	15
<b>Les Engagés</b>	472 755	6,78	14
<b>Vooruit</b>	565 637	8,11	13
<b>Christian Democrats (CD&amp;V)</b>	556 881	7,98	11
<b>Liberals and Democrats (Open VLD)</b>	379 297	5,44	7
<b>Groen</b>	322 887	4,63	6
<b>Écolo !</b>	204 438	2,93	3
<b>Others</b>	304 964	5,47	0

source: <https://elections2024.belgium.be/fr/resultats-chiffres?el=CK&id=CKR00000>

The outgoing government coalition known as Vivaldi (in reference to the colours of the 4 seasons), led by Alexander De Croo (Open VLD) and comprising the MR, CD&V, PS, Vooruit, Groen and Ecolo! will not be able to continue in office. The Socialists and the Ecologists recorded a decline, while the MR and the Engagés are on the rise. The

NVA could join the next federal government. "We are extremely opposed on the future of Belgium. On the socio-economic question, on security, on migration, we are very close," said Georges-Louis Bouchez, when asked about an alliance with the NVA.

In the coming days, King Philippe is expected to hold talks with the leaders of the main political parties, before appointing one or more advisors. These are generally experienced politicians who are tasked with identifying possible solutions for forming a government. After gathering their

information, the King chooses the leader of one of the parties represented in parliament to form a government. If he succeeds, he will be appointed Prime Minister of the Kingdom. This could take some time.

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