

Information about the National Elections to the Bundestag and the regional elections in the states of Brandenburg and Schleswig-Holstein

1. National elections

1.1 Situation

In the last federal elections in 2005 DIE LINKE.PDS with open lists and candidates from the WASG (Wahlalternative Arbeit und Soziale Gerechtigkeit – Electoral Alternative Labour and Social Justice) reached 8.7 % of the votes and got 54 mandates. In Berlin the party won three constituencies.¹ The Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) won by a narrow margin before the Social Democrats (SPD), which until then had run the government together with the Greens. Neither the CDU nor the SPD had a majority to form a government together with their partner of choice, the FDP (Liberals) respectively the Greens. Since all parties had excluded any co-operation with DIE LINKE, they were forced to form a so called Grand coalition.

1.2 Result of the elections

	First vote ²			Second vote ³			Seats	
	votes	%	+/-	votes	%	+/-	number	+/-
voters	62.132.442	-	-	62.132.442	-	-		
voter's turnout	43.997.633	70,8	-6,8	43.997.633	70,8	-6,8		
invalid	761.816	1,7	-0,0	640.091	1,5	-0,1		
valid	43.235.817	98,3	0,0	43.357.542	98,5	0,1		
SPD	12.077.437	27,9	-10,5	9.988.843	23,0	-11,2	149	-76
CDU	13.852.743	32,0	-0,6	11.824.794	27,3	-0,5	239	+13 ⁴
CSU ⁵	3.190.950	7,4	-0,9	2.830.210	6,5	-0,9		
FDP	4.075.115	9,4	4,7	6.313.023	14,6	4,7	93	+32
DIE LINKE	4.790.007	11,1	3,1	5.153.884	11,9	3,2	76	+22
GRÜNE (Greens)	3.974.803	9,2	3,8	4.641.197	10,7	2,6	68	+17

¹ In Germany, half of the members of Parliament are elected directly in 299 constituencies by simple majority.

² For the constituency.

³ Determines the composition of the Parliament.

⁴ The Conservatives got more seats despite their losses in the second vote because of the constituencies they won.

⁵ The CSU (Christian Social Union) forms together with the CDU the conservative group.

	First vote ²			Second vote ³			Seats	
	votes	%	+/-	votes	%	+/-	number	+/-
NPD ⁶	768.175	1,8	-0,0	635.437	1,5	-0,1		
REP ⁷	30.045	0,1	-0,0	193.473	0,4	-0,1		
PIRATEN	46.750	0,1	0,1	845.904	2,0	2,0		
others	429.792	1,0		930.777	2,0			

Source: 2009 Der Bundeswahlleiter

For the first time since 1994 the elections brought a “black-yellow” (cons.-lib.) majority in the second vote in comparison with the other three parliamentary parties (48.4% to 45.6%). In the 17th German Bundestag CDU/CSU and FDP have a majority of 332 out of 622 representatives. Source of this change is the weakness of the SPD and the strength of the FDP.

a. A lot of historical results

The 17th election of the Bundestag on September 27th, 2009 brought results that are to call historical from many points of view:

- The **voter's turnout** was 70.8 %. That is lowest ever since the foundation of the federal republic.
- The **conservative parties** reached 33.8 %. That is the worst result since the election 1949.
- The **SPD** got 23.0 %. That is even 5.8 points less than its all time low in 1953.
- The **FDP** reached 14.6 % which is its best result since the foundation of the federal republic.
- **DIE LINKE** reached its best result in federal elections, as well as the **Greens**.

For the first time DIE LINKE won **directly constituencies** outside of Berlin:

- 1 in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- 2 in Thuringia
- 4 in Brandenburg and
- 5 in Saxony-Anhalt.

The result is a political landslide because of the high losses of the SPD while the CDU/CSU also lost. None of the both government parties could win more votes. All three opposition parties won, mostly the FDP (Liberals). The latter makes the step into the government.

The CDU/CSU lost 2 million votes, the SPD 6.2 million. In spite of the losses the CDU/CSU won three seats more because of victories in the constituencies. The SPD lost one third of their voters.

⁶ National Democratic Party – right wing extremists.

⁷ Republicans – right wing extremists.

Changes

	2005			2009			Difference		
	absolut	%	Seats	absolut	%	Saets	absolut	%	Seats
eligible voters	61.870.711			62.132.442			261.731		
non-voters	13.826.577			18.134.809			4.308.232		
votes	48.044.134	77,7%		43.997.633	70,8%		-4.046.501		
valid votes	47.287.988			43.357.542			-3.930.446		
CDU/CSU	16.631.049	35,2%	226	14.654.994	33,8%	239	-1.976.055	-1,4%	13
SPD	16.194.665	34,2%	222	9.988.843	23,0%	146	-6.205.822	-11,2%	-76
Greens	3.838.326	8,1%	51	4.641.197	10,7%	68	802.871	2,6%	17
FDP	4.648.144	9,8%	61	6.313.023	14,6%	93	1.664.879	4,7%	32
PDS/ LINKE	4.118.194	8,7%	54	5.153.884	11,9%	76	1.035.690	3,2%	22
REP	266.101	0,6%		193.473	0,4%		-72.628	-0,1%	
NPD	748.568	1,6%		635.437	1,5%		-113.131	-0,1%	
Piraten				845.904	2,0%		845.904	2,0%	
others	842.94	1 1,8%		930.787	2,1%		87.846	0,4%	

b. Voters

According to the data of ARD TV, DIE LINKE got 780,000 Votes of people who 2005 voted for the SPD, 111,000 from the Greens, 70,000 from the conservatives and lost both 10,000 votes to the FDP and others. Per saldo, it did not catch any vote from the former non-voters.

From ... to	Voter migration						
	CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Linke	Greens	Non-voter	others
CDU/CSU	-	620.000	-1.110.000	-70.000	-70.000	-920.000	-70.000
SPD	-620.000	-	-430.000	-780.000	-710.000	-1.640.000	-270.000
FDP	1.110.000	430.000	-	10.000	20.000	-120.000	-40.000
Linke	70.000	780.000	-10.000	-	110.000	0	-10.000
Greens	70.000	710.000	-20.000	-110.000	-	-20.000	-150.000
Non-voter	920.000	1.640.000	120.000	0	20.000	-	0
Others	70.000	270.000	40.000	10.000	150.000	0	-

Source: <http://wahlarchiv.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2009-09-27-BT-DE/analyse-wanderung.shtml>

DIE LINKE got the most votes (26 %) from unemployed people (22 % SPD, 21 % CDU, 10 % FDP, 9 % Greens). Both 12 % of first-time-voters and of voters under the age of 30 voted for DIE LINKE.

Age	CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Linke	Greens
all	34	23	14	12	10
First time voters	25	18	14	12	16
18-24	25	18	15	12	15
25-34	29	17	18	12	13
35-44	30	21	16	12	14
45-59	31	24	14	15	12
60 and older	43	27	12	10	5

Quelle: <http://wahlarchiv.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2009-09-27-BT-DE/umfrage-alter.shtml>

	women	men	total		CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Linke	Greens
CDU/CSU	36	32	34	total	34	23	14	12	10
SPD	23	23	23	workers	29	24	13	18	6
FDP	12	13	14	White-collar workers	33	21	16	11	14
Linke	11	9	12	Self-employed	34	14	26	7	14
Greens	13	16	10	pensioner	40	29	13	12	5
				unemployed	22	23	10	25	9

Sources : <http://wahlarchiv.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2009-09-27-BT-DE/umfrage-werwas.shtml>

<http://wahlarchiv.tagesschau.de/wahlen/2009-09-27-BT-DE/umfrage-job.shtml>

c. Restructuring of traditional camps or new options?

How far the result will be the base of a true five party system with corresponding to it coalition options is less sure to predict now than in 2005. After all the one traditional camp, the “black-yellow” or assumed “bourgeois” camp, will form the government, the other, the red-rose-green camp will be the opposition. So there are, under these base conditions, arguments for the relaunch of the traditional political camps, at least in the public opinion.

1.3 Statements

Lothar Bisky: "The Left is growing. We will be the social force in the parliament. We will fight against the dismantling of the welfare state. It was right that we went on our way, putting in front our common aims."

“In a certain sense we broke the sound barrier. The Left established itself in Germany. I believe that we indeed have the chance to grow if we don’t make heavy mistakes. We know that we have to stabilise the party, and we know as well that we have to keep our promises from the campaigns. We strive for more social justice and we keep on saying: Social and political problems cannot be solved by military means.”

Gregor Gysi: "That is a historical event. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany a force left from the social democrats got a result over 10 %. This is the reward for our consistent policy against the dismantling of the welfare state, for social justice and against the war in Afghanistan."

“I think we also initiated a change in the society by this. The social democrats can in no way stay as they are at the moment. Schröder “de-social-democratized” them. ... They have to pose themselves the question whether they want to stay a second (christian-democratic) union or they want to become at least a social democratic party again... That’s easier for them in opposition...”

Oskar Lafontaine: "The result is significantly better than 2005. It means a great success for DIE LINKE. Also in the new electoral period we will focus on our social issue. We will go on fighting against Hartz IV and the pension age of 67. We will go on striving for a legal minimum wage and for not making the only the employees and the socially weak pay the costs of the crisis. Those who caused the crisis, bankers and speculators should pay. Last not least the German army must be withdrawn from Afghanistan.”

“DIE LINKE changed the German political system. We have now a five- or six-party-system.”

“We think of the tasks to solve. Until now no government succeeded in the regulation of banks. Moreover, the next world wide crash is prepared, because nowhere the finance industry is hindered to continue with their fatal businesses.”

Petra Pau: „The social conscience of Germany is strengthened. I see with gratification that the right wing extremists did reach neither the national nor the regional parliaments.”

Dietmar Bartsch: „ The Left’s results grew in all states and in all groups of the population. We got this because we could act credibly in the campaign. We could continue with our issues all what was developed within the last years. The second reason is that DIE LINKE acted in common in this campaign. We did not make mistakes and we acted closed in this campaign.”

2. The regional election in the federal state of Brandenburg

Simultaneously with the national elections the regular elections to the parliament (Landtag) of Brandenburg and early elections, after the break of the CDU-SPD coalition in July, to the Landtag of Schleswig-Holstein took place.

In Brandenburg, the SPD maintained its position as strongest party in parliament and improved its result from 31,9% to 33,0%. DIE LINKE is again the second strongest party in parliament. It slightly lost in percentages (27,2% vs. 28,0% in 2004), but could win 50.000 additional absolute votes, due to a higher voter turnout (67,5% in 2009 to 56,4% in 2004), and won 21 amongst the 44 constituencies. The CDU, part of the governing coalition with the SPD, arrived far behind the two strongest parties and nearly got the same result from 2004 (19,8% vs. 19,4%). The three big parties could mainly get additional votes from people that had abstained from voting during the last elections.

The Greens and the Liberals (FDP) managed to re-enter the parliament after 15 years of absence with 5,6% resp. 7,2% of the votes. Thus, all the five political parties represented in the Bundestag are now represented in the Landtag of Brandenburg.

The extreme right DVU (Deutsche Volksunion – German People’s Union) lost significantly (1,2% vs. 6,1% in 2004) and is not any more represented in the Landtag. The second running extreme right party, NPD (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands – National Democratic Party), could also not enter the parliament. Altogether, both parties of the extreme right couldn’t get more than 3,7%. A pre-election survey in Brandenburg has shown that the readiness of people to vote for the extreme right has dropped from 11% to 7%.

	LTW04			LTW09			Difference		
	absolut	%	Seats	absolut	%	Seats	absolut	%	Seats
eligible voters	2.117.146			2.112.502			-4.644		
non-voters	922.954			687.318			-235.636		
voters	1.194.192	56,4%	88	1.425.184	67,5%	88	230.992	11,1%	0
valid votes	1.168.909			1.388.734			219.825		
CDU	227.062	19,4%	20	274.774	19,8%	19	47.712	0,4%	-1
SPD	372.942	31,9%	33	458.825	33,0%	31	85.883	1,1%	-2
B90/Grüne	42.091	3,6%		78.368	5,6%	5	36.277	2,0%	5
FDP	38.890	3,3%		100.042	7,2%	7	61.152	3,9%	7
PDS/LINKE	326.801	28,0%	29	377.084	27,2%	26	50.283	-0,8%	-3

DVU	71.041	6,1%	6	16.380	1,2%	0	-54.661	-4,9%	-6
NPD				35.401	2,5%	0	35.401		
others	90.082	7,7%		47.860	3,4%		-42.222	-4,3%	

The fact that the regional election results are almost stable compared with the precedent elections in 2004 can be explained by two criteria: a majority of the population has expressed being satisfied with the work of the land government and especially with the SPD head of government, and there was no main controversial political issue dominating the regional election campaign. This situation was different for the national elections. Comparing the voter's approbation for the SPD in the Landtag elections with the Bundestag elections, the gap is eye-catching: The party got 110.000 votes less from Brandenburg in the Bundestag elections, and DIE LINKE emerged as the strongest party in Brandenburg in the Bundestag elections.

The Landtag elections represent an important milestone for DIE LINKE in Brandenburg. The party proved that it could maintain its strong position in absence of an emotionally tense election campaign (as it was the case in 2004 with the protests against the so called Hartz laws of social dismantling) and despite the gains of the Greens and the FDP. DIE LINKE could also profit from the higher voter turnout.

The main issue of the campaign were good work (minimum wages to be paid by all enterprises that want to get public orders, public labour sector), good education, fight against poverty (especially children's poverty) and more direct democracy.

The former Head of federal state Matthias Platzeck is now in the condition to continue with governing – either in prosecuting the ten years lasting coalition with the CDU, or in a new coalition with DIE LINKE. He announced first negotiations with DIE LINKE. DIE LINKE top candidate Kerstin Kaiser declared that there was a chance now to form a coalition for social justice; that the political positions of DIE LINKE were well known and the SPD had now to decide whether it wanted to choose a change of political course or not.

3. The regional election in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein

The coalition between the CDU and the SPD, lead by Peter-Harry Carstensen (CDU) was formed in 2005 after the re-election of SPD prime minister Heide Simonis failed four times in the parliament because one unknown representative of the red-green coalition (tolerated by the Danish party SSW) did not vote for her. This grand coalition was not loved by its members from the beginning. In July 2009 the conflicts culminated and Carstensen decided to initiate a break of the coalition in order to come to early election together with the national elections. He hoped to take benefits from the atmosphere in favour of a conservative-liberal government that the polls showed at this time.

In the election the CDU got 31.5% of the votes and became strongest political power. Nevertheless it was its worst result since 1950. Although it lost almost 9 basis points in comparison with 2005 it reached 34 instead of 30 seats because of the constituencies that it won.⁸

⁸ See above footnote 1 and 3. The electoral law in Schleswig-Holstein is similar to the national.

Because of the directly won mandates of the CDU and the compensation for the other parties the new parliament will have 95 instead of 69 members. The FDP gained 15 mandates and so a “black-yellow” government can be formed as Prime Minister Carstensen wished. The SPD lost more than 13 basis points and got 25.4% - its worst result ever in regional elections in Schleswig-Holstein.

DIE LINKE gained 6.0% and enters the 12th (of 16) federal state parliament.

DIE LINKE regional association in Schleswig-Holstein is young and faced some current strife within the last year. Some members left the party two days before the elections under the attention of the media. Under these conditions, generally spoken, the result is a success.

Antje Jansen, top candidate: “We ran for the first time in a regional election and we immediately stepped into the Landtag. We scored with our social issues. The voters voted for us as a social alternative...”

Unfortunately we could not prevent black-yellow. We will go into opposition. We will bring a fresh wind into the Landtag in Kiel; we will fight for more transparency and openness and first of all for social justice.”

	LTW05			LTW09			Difference		
	absolut	%	Seats	absolut	%	Seats	absolut	%	Seats
eligible voters	2.186.620			2.220.398			33.778		
non-voters	731.526			589.241			-142.285		
voters	1.455.094	66,5%	69	1.631.157	73,5%	95	176.063		26
invalid votes	20.289			33.683			13.394		
Valid votes	1.434.805			1.597.474			162.669		
CDU	576.095	40,2%	30	503.592	31,5%	34	-72.503	-8,6%	4
SPD	554.879	38,7%	29	406.215	25,4%	25	-148.664	-13,2%	-4
Greens	89.387	6,2%	4	198.563	12,4%	12	109.176	6,2%	8
FDP	94.935	6,6%	4	238.568	14,9%	15	143.633	8,3%	11
DIE LINKE	11.392	0,8%		95.238	6,0%	5	83.846	5,2%	5
SSW	51.920	3,6%	2	69.438	4,3%	4	17.518	0,7%	2
Sonstige	56.197	3,9%		85.860	5,4%		29.663	1,5%	

The voter turnout was higher than in precedent elections, due to the national election held on the same time. The smaller parties took the benefit from this fact.

The SSW (Südschleswigscher Wählerverband – South Schleswig Voters Association) is a speciality in Schleswig-Holstein. It is a party of the Danish minority. That is why the threshold of five percent is not valid for them. It gained the best result since 50 years.

The CDU lost 100,000 votes to other parties. The majority of them (75,000) went to the FDP. The SPD lost most of the outgoing votes to the LINKE and the Greens. Another part went to the FDP.

Greens, LINKE and FDP benefit from the losses of the CDU, although on different levels. All parties gained votes from the camp of the non-voters.

The four parties that already were in the parliament were elected out of principles, to an different extend because of disappointment by other parties. Votes for DIE LINKE and the SSW were given to a bigger part because of frustration and can be seen as protest votes.

The election campaign was shaped by the affair of the bankrupt state’s bank HSH Nordbank and by economic, employment and energy policy. DIE LINKE distinguished itself by social

justice issues and by striving for the interests of the employees in the crisis. In both issues DIE LINKE benefits from the shrinking trustworthiness of the SPD, according to the polling firm Infratest dimap.

Sources:

HORST KAHRS UND DR. BENJAMIN HOFF: [Wahlbericht und erste Analyse der 17. Bundestagswahl vom 27. September 2009](#)

HORST KAHRS UND DR. BENJAMIN HOFF: [Die Landtagswahl in Schleswig-Holstein 2009](#)

HORST KAHRS UND DR. BENJAMIN HOFF: [Wahlbericht und erste Analyse der Landtagswahl 2009 in Brandenburg](#)