

2021 Election Results (September 28, 2021)

Abstract

The 2021 Bundestag elections resulted in the first coalition of three parties on the national level, the so-called “traffic light coalition.” It is named after the colors of the three parties involved [*Ampelkoalition*], namely red for the SPD, green for the Greens, and yellow for the FDP. This election analysis highlights both continuity and change, pointing in particular to North-South, East-West, and rural-urban divides. As has been true in the past, the SPD dominated in the North whereas CDU/CSU received the most votes in the South and parts of the West. A new development was the strong showing of the far-right AfD: it did particularly well in the south-eastern parts of the former East Germany.

Source

When it comes to elections Germany is still in some respects a divided country. In general, Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) dominated the south and west, while the center-left Social Democrats (SPD) came out strongest in the rest of the country, except for some areas of the former East Germany which are marked by strong support for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Almost all of Bavaria is still dominated by the CDU’s Bavarian sister party, the CSU, despite its worst election performance since 1949. The exception is Bavaria’s largest city, Munich, where the environmentalist Greens are now the largest party.

The southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg is a bastion of the CDU, despite the Greens leading that state’s government. The Greens, however, won the university cities of Freiburg, Tübingen and Heidelberg with their many young voters. There were also a few pockets of SPD support.

Particularly interesting is Germany’s most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia — which stands as a kind of Germany in miniature. The SPD is strongest in the state’s rust belt Ruhr area, while the CDU is strongest in the more rural districts.

In contrast, the eastern German states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg are completely red, indicating that the SPD performed the best in all constituencies. The northern states Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony-Anhalt likewise went strongly red, and to a lesser extent, parts of Lower Saxony. A crucial turning point was the outgoing chancellor’s own constituency in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which went red after the SPD candidate defeated the CDU candidate meant to replace Merkel.

Far-right stronghold in the east

There is now a clear far-right populist belt running through southeastern Germany. The AfD dominates almost all of Saxony as well as the southern part of Thuringia and the southern tip of Saxony-Anhalt. All three states were previously part of the communist German Democratic Republic, more widely referred to as East Germany. In Saxony, the AfD has become by far the strongest party, with almost one in four voters voting for them.

There, the formerly dominant CDU slipped behind the SPD and into third place. The AfD also came in first place in Thuringia. Responding to the loss, Brandenburg CDU state chairman Jan Redmann wrote on

Twitter that “the CDU must not become a West German party after Angela Merkel.”

The Greens have their strongholds scattered throughout Germany rather than concentrated in one state or region. All of those areas are major cities or university towns.

[...]

Source: Christoph Hasselbach, “Germany’s Election Results: Facts and figures,” DW.com, September 28, 2021 <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-election-results-facts-and-figures/a-59343789>

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