

Kyriakos Mitsotakis in search of an absolute majority

As expected, no government could be formed following the general elections in Greece on 21 May.

On 29 May, a presidential decree therefore called the Greek electorate to the polls on 25 June for new general elections. Until then, Ioannis Sarmas, President of the Court of Auditors, will act as interim Prime Minister.

The general elections will be held using a new semi-proportional voting system, with a bonus for the party that comes out ahead. The number of additional seats is not fixed, but depends on the percentage of votes won by the party in question. If that party obtains 25% of the vote, the bonus is 20 seats, while the remaining 280 seats (the *Vouli*, the single chamber of Parliament, has 300 deputies) are distributed proportionally among the parties that have managed to exceed the 3% threshold of the vote required to be represented. For each additional 0.5% of the vote, the bonus increases by one seat and the seats of the other parties are reduced accordingly. The maximum that this bonus can reach is 50 seats, and it is awarded to any party that obtains around 40% of the vote.

"New Democracy only gained two points compared to 2019. Above all, the legislative elections of 21 May revealed the collapse of the Coalition of the Radical Left-Progressive Alliance (SYRIZA), which failed to convince voters with its idea of a coalition government," points out Maria Karaklioumi, an analyst at the RASS opinion institute. It should be noted that coalitions are not part of Greek political culture, and they have also left some unpleasant traces in their wake.

On 21 May, the gap between the leading right-wing party - New Democracy - and the leading left-wing party - the Coalition of the Radical Left-Progressive Alliance - rose to more than 20 points (20.72), the largest gap since Greece's return to democracy in 1974. The left-wing parties also achieved the lowest result in their history.

SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras failed to convince his compatriots that he could be a real alternative to outgoing Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. He tried in vain to attract the centrists while maintaining a very left-wing political programme. The gamble failed on both sides. The centrists preferred Kyriakos Mitsotakis and in the eyes of many, Alexis Tsipras remained the man who had betrayed his campaign promises over the previous decade.

On the eve of a new general election, SYRIZA wants to mobilise abstentionists and reduce its gap with New Democracy. It repeats that it must *"prevent the formation of an all-powerful right-wing government, which would be bad for democracy and for the country"*. The Movement for Change-Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK-KINAL) is hoping to attract some SYRIZA voters and ultimately establish itself as the leading opposition party. Its leader Nikos Androulakis has stated that under no circumstances will he form an alliance with New Democracy after the elections.

However, the momentum is clearly with New Democracy, which on 21 May won 146 seats in Parliament, just 5 short of an absolute majority. According to a number of opinion polls, the majority of voters opted for the party which, in their view, is most capable of improving the functioning of the state and has the best economic programme.

During his election campaign, Kyriakos Mitsotakis highlighted the return of growth, the fall in unemployment and the improvement in Greece's image abroad. He promised the country's economic and geopolitical stability and the continuation of reforms,

General elections in Greece

25th June 2023

in particular the upgrading of the lowest salaries. "We want a strong mandate for a stable government to implement our programme, which cannot be achieved with a limited majority", he declared.

New Democracy seems to fear only one thing: that its voters will be so confident of the party's victory that they will not go to the polls on 25 June.

According to the latest opinion poll conducted by the Metron/Analysos Mega institute at the end of May, New Democracy is expected to come out ahead with 41%

of the vote, followed by Syriza with 19.1%, PASOK with 11.7% and the Communist Party (KKE) with 7.6%. Greek Solution (EL), the ultra-nationalist radical right party founded and led by Kyriakos Velopoulos, is expected to be the 5th party to win MPs with 4.4%.

Kyriakos Mitsotakis should therefore win the 50-seat bonus provided by the new semi-proportional voting system that came into force on 25 June. As a result, the outgoing Prime Minister should have an absolute majority in Parliament.

Results of the general elections on 21 May 2023 in Greece

Turnout : 60.94%

Political Parties	Number of votes won	Percentage of votes won	Number of seats
New Democracy (ND)	2 407 860	40.79	146
Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance (SYRIZA)	1 184 500	20.07	71
Movement for Change-Panhellenic Socialist (PASOK-KINAL)	676 166	11.46	41
Communist Party (KKE)	426 741	7,23	26
Greek Solution (EL)	262 529	4.45	16
Others	945 054	16	0

Source : <https://ekloges.ypes.gr/current/v/home/parties/>

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