European Elections monitor

Lithuanians vote for Change

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Results

The main opinion party Homeland Union-Christian Democrats (TS-LKD), led by Gabrielus Landsbergis, grandson of the father of Lithuanian independence Vytautas Landsbergis, and the Peasant and Greens Union (LVZS) led by Ramunas Karbaukis came out ahead in the first round of the general election organised on 9th October in Lithuania. They respectively won 21.66% and 20 seats and 21.54% and 19 seats in the Seimas, the only chamber of parliament. The Social Democratic Party (LSP) led by outgoing Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevicius, fell really short of the result forecast for it by the polls, winning only 14.43% and 13 seats.

The Liberal Movement (LRLS) won 9% of the vote and 8 MPs; Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles (LLRA), a party representing the Polish minority led by Waldemar Tomaszewski, 5.49% and 5 seats and For Order and Justice (TT), a populist party led by Rolandas Paksas, 5.33% and 5 seats. We should note that the Labour Party (DP), a member of the outgoing government coalition led by Loreta Grauziniene, won 4.7% of the vote, which is below the minimum 5% necessary to sit in the Lithuanian parliament.

4 candidates were elected in the first round which is a majority vote: one from the Peasant and Green Party, another from the Homeland Union-Christian Democratic Party and two others from Electoral Action for Lithuanian Poles. The second round of voting will take place on 23rd October.

Turnout was slightly down on that registered during the previous general elections on 14th and 28th October 2012: only one Lithuanian in two turned out to ballot (50.55%, i.e.-2.38 points). 87, 280 people chose to vote early, i.e. 3.5%, one point more than in the last election of this kind.

Results of the 1st round in the general elections of 9th October 2016 in Lithuania

Turnout : 50,55%

Political Parties	Proportional Vote			Majority vote	Total number of seats
	Number of votes won	% of votes won	Number of seats	Number of seats	
Homeland Union-Christian Democratic Party (TS-LKD)	275 331	21.66	20	1	21
Peasant and Green Party (LVZS)	273 857	21.54	19	1	20
Social Democratic Party (LSP)	183 417	14.43	13		13
Liberal Movement (LRLS)	114 862	9.04	8		8
Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles (LLRA)	69 796	5.49	5	2	7
For Order and Justice (TT)	67 797	5.33	5		5
Others	282 029	23	0		

Source : http://vrk.lt/2016-seimo/rezultatai?srcUrl=/rinkimai/102/1/1304/rezultatai/lt/rezultataiDaugmVrt.html

Lithuanians have therefore voted for change and bluffed the polls which anticipated the re-election of of the Social Democratic Party in office. The move made on 23rd March by one of Lithuania's best love personalities, Saulius Skvernelis, the then Home Affairs Minister (he was replaced in this office on 13th April by independent Tomas Zilinskas) and former head of the national police force, known for his fight to counter corruption to join the Peasant and Green Party, seemed to benefit the latter greatly.

"*I am prepared to speak with both the conservatives and the social democrats,"* declared Saulius Skvernelis. "*The next government coalition might bring together the Peasant and Green Party and the Social Democratic Party or even the Peasant and Green Party, the Homeland Union-Lithuania Christian Democrats and the Liberal Movement. Today, I would bet on the latter option,"* declared Mazvydas Jastramskis, a political expert at the University of Vilnius. "The election on 9th October was a protest vote against the outgoing government led by the social democrats," indicated Ramunas Vilpisauskas, Director of the Institute for International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius. "The chances of reinstating the outgoing government are close to zero," stressed Kestutis Girnius, an associate professor in the same establishment.

The Social Democratic Party governed Lithuania from 2012 to 2016 in coalition with the Labour Party and For Order and Justice. Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles participated in government from 2012 and 2014. The party of the outgoing Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevicius, who had promised further increases in the minimum wage and also for civil servants if he won, has certainly been sanctioned by the electorate, who are dissatisfied with their living standards (employment and wages were two of the reasons behind the vote according to the polls). The Social Democrats also suffered for their involvement at the beginning of the year in a corruption scandal involving the construction of new buildings in protected areas near Druskininkai. "*People want a new party, new faces. Politicians must respect the choice made by public opinion,"* maintained Algirdas Butkevicius as the results were announced.
The next round of voting will take place on 23rd October to determine the names of all of the MPs who will take part in the new parliament.

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