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## **The People's Party won the election. The Socialists kept their narrow lead. But who will govern the country? Europe turns its attention to the vote in Spain**

None of the winners have the support to govern. The ruling party lost its leading position... but could govern again. The results of the Spanish vote can be interpreted from different angles and in different ways. But there are some undeniable facts. First, the numbers. Spain's People's Party, led by Alberto Nunez Feijoo, former leader of the opposition, won 136 seats (33.1% of the national vote), while the Socialist Party of outgoing Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez won 122 seats (31.7%). The seat allocation system rewards the PP and penalises the PSOE. The far-right Vox party - the biggest loser in the elections - won 33 seats (12.4 per cent) and lost 19. The left-wing coalition Sumar won 31 seats (12.3%). Other smaller parties, both regional and secessionist (including the Catalan parties), took the remaining seats. In fact, the PP missed the opportunity to win an absolute majority on its own, as Nuñez Feijóo had hoped. But even in a coalition with the far-right Vox, the PP fails to secure a majority of more than 176 seats in the Cortes. In fact, the People's Party increased its consensus at the expense of its potential ally. On the other hand, the Socialists (who were defeated in the recent regional elections) are making gains compared to the opinion polls. So much so that Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez could form a new government if he managed to secure a majority with the Left and the regional groups, which are usually at odds with the People's Party. But they are likely to raise the price of their support for the prime minister. In Madrid, there is already talk of snap elections before the end of the year. In addition, the outcome of the vote in Spain presents a number of peculiarities. The two largest national parties win most of the vote. This is what usually happens in Germany. It does not happen in other major European countries, including France and Italy. New parties - Ciudadanos and Podemos - are disappearing or losing their electoral appeal. On the other hand, parties defending territorial interests, such as the Catalan pro-independence party, are holding their own. The results of the Spanish vote are being analysed in Brussels with a view to the European Parliament elections in June 2024. The 'dark wave' of Vox's potential alliance with the PP - as some have hastily dubbed it - has been halted for now. But nationalist, right-wing parties are growing and governing in several EU member states. The Socialists are withstanding the blow. Voters are proving fickle, polarised, tending towards conservative and protectionist parties, generally inclined to reject governing parties, but not always willing to trust the newcomers. The European elections are less than a year away. Any scenario is still possible. But EU integration cannot run the risk of being hampered or obstructed by national, partisan or party interests. This would jeopardise the very principle on which the European Union itself is founded - solidarity between its Peoples and States.

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