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## **Germany: Thuringia's Bishops, "AfD's ethnic-nationalist programme is not compatible with Christian faith"**

The results of the election in Thuringia and Saxony are worrying the local Bishops, who have taken position and urged the democratic parties to create stable regional governments that can meet the voters' demands. In Thuringia, the Bishops speak of a challenge that will be difficult for anyone. "The establishment of a new government will be very difficult in the current circumstances. We call on all democratic parties to quickly come to an agreement on a feasible coalition for the sake of our country", the Bishops state in a letter from Erfurt. The Bishops encouraged all stakeholders to always put the will to solve problems together before the political goals of their parties. In addition to mgr. Ulrich Neymeyr, Bishop of Erfurt, the letter has been signed by mgr. Heinrich Timmerevers, Bishop of Dresden-Meißen, and by mgr. Michael Gerber, Bishop of Fulda, whose dioceses include the area of Thuringia. The Bishops pointed out that they are deeply worried about the social climate in the Land: "The fact that immigrants are now worried about their safety, that quite a lot of people are seriously thinking of leaving Thuringia, or that businesses are questioning their future in our country is unacceptable". Faced with Alternative for Germany's success at the election in Thuringia, with 32.8% of votes, the Bishops insist that "an ethnic-nationalist programme like the one that the AfD stands for is not compatible with Christian faith". The Bishops of Saxony too have taken position after the regional election, and, in a joint statement, Heinrich Timmerevers, Bishop of Dresden, and Tobias Bilz, the region's Protestant Bishop, urged the parties to take the voters' hopes seriously. "The newly-elected regional parliament, with its seven parties, is more colourful than ever". Timmevers and Bilz asked "not to give way to extremist and nationalist ideas in our countries".

Valentina Bombelli