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## Elections to the 8<sup>th</sup> European Parliament

### Preliminary analysis of the electoral results in Germany

Prognosis based on exit polls:

	<i>CDU</i>	<i>CSU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>Grüne</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>LINKE</i>	<i>AfD</i>	<i>Anderer</i>
<b>ARD 20:42</b>	30,4%	5,1%	27,2%	10,7%	3,3%	7,5%	7,0%	8,8%
<b>Stze</b>	30	5	27	11	3	7	7	6
<b>ZDF 19:24</b>	35,7%		27,2%	10,7%	3,0%	7,5%	6,9%	9,1%
<b>Stze</b>	35		27	11	3	7	7	6

#### Kleine Parteien

	<i>Piraten</i>	<i>Freie Wähler</i>	<i>NPD</i>	<i>Tierschutz</i>	<i>Familie</i>	<i>ödp</i>	<i>Partei</i>	<i>REP</i>
<b>ARD 20:42</b>	1,4%	1,5%	1,0%	1,2%	0,7%	0,6%		0,4%
<b>Stze</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1		
<b>ZDF 19:24</b>	1,5%	1,5%	1,0%	1,1%	0,8%	0,7%	0,5%	0,4%
<b>Stze</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1		

The parties of the German governing coalition achieved significant gains compared with the EP election of 2009. However, the relation of forces has changed: while the SPD will probably increase its vote by about 7 percentage points, the CDU seems to be largely stable, although its Bavarian regional sister party, the CSU, will lose more than two percentage points, for a total of only 5% nationwide. Angela Merkel seems to be an electoral draw, but Bavarian Premier Horst Seehofer does not: the European elections were a favorable opportunity for Bavarians to send their state government a message; in the rest of the country, no such deed seems to have been felt.

The strength of the governing parties is primarily due to the widespread perception on the part of the population, that the general economic situation, and also the personal situation of most people, is current. Moreover, politics in Germany seems to have been a stronger motivator for voters than European politics were. The campaign of the two parties was focused on the role of Germany in the EU and the advantages of the EU and the euro for the economic situation of Germany. Moreover, the government and parliament passed a number of resolutions and laws prior to Election Day, such as the minimum wage and pension increases, which signaled a return to social democratic policies. This primarily explains the electoral success of the SPD, which, however, is still below the 30% mark, and far behind the CDU. Nonetheless, the party seems to have recovered from its poor results during the 2009 – 2013 era. At the end of the campaign, the SPD played the German card with determination, by calling for votes for Martin Schultz, a candidate “from Germany” and “for Europe.”

The Left Party showed itself to be stable at approximately the level of voting in 2009. However, that meant that the party fell behind in its results in last year’s federal election. While the party lost votes across the board in eastern Germany, it was able to increase its vote in the West German states, and considerably, in some cases. However, it will probably lose one seat in the EP, due to the abolition of the threshold. The campaign of the Left Party was oriented primarily toward its core voters, and concentrated on the core issues for which the party is well known.

The Greens suffered slight losses, although they recovered considerably from last year’s federal elections.

The greatest changes came for the “bourgeois” parties: the losses of the FDP underscored the party’s defeat in the federal elections, and showed that it will have trouble fighting its way out of the 2 – 3% ghetto. On the other hand, the “Alternative for Germany” (AfD) could celebrate its first electoral success, and will presumably send the same number of members to the European Parliament as the Left Party. It drew protest

votes and votes from the nationalist, liberal-conservative, petty-bourgeois circles. The bulk of its support comes from economic-liberal and value-conservative voter groups. They trust having their own economic capabilities rewarded in the European competitive market, and see the dominant EU policies as threatened by their concepts of order based on the idea of competition. Voters who have become politically homeless are now attaching themselves to the nationalist and competition-oriented populism of the AfD; whether or not this will become a stable association is more than an open question.

In addition to the AfD, a large number of other small parties, about six, will enter the new European Parliament with one member from each. This is possible due to the abolition of the threshold, due to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court. The fact that one of them is a representative of the fascist NPD is more than regrettable.

The electoral results in Germany, as in other countries, were, first and foremost, national electoral results. They were determined by the question of what the situation of the political scene in Germany is, and only secondarily by the question of which representatives from Germany could represent German interest in Europe. European interests, or an idea of what would be good for further European integration to create a democratic, social Europe were only a minor factor in the electoral campaign.

The electoral results show our European partner countries that the political relations of power in Germany are stable. The right wing and nationalist populist parties exist, but they are still very small. By contrast to other countries, such as France and Britain, where the “right-wing populists” have advanced to the top positions and will soon be able to exert considerable pressure on policy, this will not be the case in Germany. On the other hand, it can be expected that the CSU will continue to increase pressure to re-nationalize immigration and social policies more strongly.