

The European Elections in Germany: Satire and Concerns over the European Project

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Eurocrisis in the
Press

By [Max Hänska](#)

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The European elections in Germany didn't produce major surprises, yet a mood of trepidation and uncertainty prevails. The Christian Democrats did better in absolute numbers than in the last election though relatively their share of the vote remained roughly unchanged (as participation increased). The Social Democrats made their biggest ever gain in European elections (but only after recording large losses in 2005 and 2009). The eurosceptic AFD (Alternative for Germany) did well, as expected.

The rise of eurosceptic groups in the European Parliament has led some commentators to rally in support of the European project, broad commitment to which seems unabated, amidst concerns over greater political uncertainty and instability in Europe.

The success of the FN in France and UKIP in the UK is viewed with consternation, as two of Europe's indispensable countries are considered to be slipping out of the European fold. Wolfgang Schäuble [lamented](#) that a quarter of the French electorate had cast their ballot for a fascist party. Some commentators [made the case](#) for concessions to keep the UK in Europe, if only because German and British thinking aligns on trade and fiscal discipline.

The new composition of the [European Parliament](#), and the changing political mood in Europe also raised concerns in Germany that Europe is now (even) less able to act cohesively and decisively in the face of the challenges it faces. Some worry that the new political landscape will lead to deadlock and acrimony. Merkel, who remains uncontested as Germany's most popular politician, will have to continue leading in Europe, finding agreements under ever more difficult conditions. However, the rise of anti-austerity forces (e.g. Hollande, Renzi and Tsipras are calling for new growth oriented economic policies) on the one hand and eurosceptic forces on the other (the AFD in Germany will hold any concession she makes against her) will leave Merkel little room to manoeuvre, particularly as her popularity rests on the perception that she successfully defended German interests in Brussels.

And what of the new president of the commission? Will he (or she) be someone who can provide leadership and broker agreement, rather than a soft compromise pliable by national governments? There seems to be an appetite for the former in Germany, and Juncker may just be the statesman to command the necessary political project.

But not all is serious in Germany's European election (who said Germans don't have a sense of humor?). Martin Sonneborn, a newly elected MEP and leader of the satirical party 'Die Partei', which gained 0.6% of the vote, [declared](#) that he would "spend the first four weeks in Brussels by intensively preparing for his resignation", in order to allow the inner cadre of his party to each have a spin on the Brussels gravy train. After all, he explained, they had all worked many unremunerated years in national politics, so it is only fair each of them should enjoy a share of parliamentary perks.



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