

Beat: Politics

## The future of Spain

### Policy options after the elections

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**USPA NEWS** - The legislative elections held on Sunday in Spain, won by the conservative Popular Party without sufficient majority, have painted a picture full of uncertainties with several possible scenarios, but all with the common element of the difficult governance.

The significant loss of votes experienced by Spain's two main political parties - the conservative Popular Party and the Socialist Party - and the dispersion of the vote, which will lead to Parliament thirteen political parties in ten parliamentary groups, predicts a difficult legislature to govern and not rules out early elections in a short period of time. The Popular Party, which enjoyed absolute majority the previous legislature, has lost 63 members and nearly 16% of support, staying with 123 deputies they are not enough to stabilize the Government. For its part, the Socialist Party has lost 20 MPs and 6.74% of support, obtaining 90 deputies. Conservatives have lost 3.6 million and Socialists 1.4 million votes.

Neither party can, by itself, form a Government. Accounts but also not out with the support of the other parties who have obtained parliamentary representation. The third party, the populist left-wing Podemos, has 69 elected deputies; the centrist Citizens 40. Catalan political parties - Left Republican and Democracy and Freedom - add 17 seats, while the Basque nationalists have six and Basque separatists have made a deputy, communist United Left have won two and party insular Canary Coalition has obtained a seat.

So that the Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, is reelected, he would need the support of Citizens, which Monday was willing to abstain to facilitate investment. But that is not enough. Rajoy require abstention of the Socialist Party, something which they are not prepared in this formation. Number 2 Socialist, Cesar Luena, announced Monday that his party "will vote no to the investiture of Rajoy". Also the secretary general of Podemos, Pablo Iglesias warned Monday that "in any way, either by active or passive" training support Rajoy's inauguration for a new term. "Rajoy and the Popular Party can not be in any way in the future Government of Spain," Iglesias said.

It would seem that a coalition of leftist parties could form a stable Government and the role it may well be. However, Socialists and Podemos collide in their conceptions of the Catalan problem. Podemos are in favor of holding a referendum in which the Catalans say if they want to remain part of Spain or prefer to be independent, and advocates urgent reform of the Constitution. The Socialist Party disagree on these two points but also conflicts with the approach of the Catalan parties on the independence and the proposals for the Basque Country of the independence of this region. Obtaining a sufficient majority seems therefore very complicated.

With these scenarios, early elections are not discarded. Nor that Spain repeat what happened a few weeks ago in Portugal, when a leftist coalition that toppled the conservative Government won the election. At the moment, the Spanish political parties set their positions. Immediately begin negotiations. The initiative belongs to the conservative Popular Party, to look for support, but not the only one. Twenty-four hours after the election, the only certainty is that the new Parliament will be on January 13 and that the vote for Prime Minister would have to be held in the Parliament between 24 and 29 January.

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