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Germany: the electoral success of the SPD and the Green Party in Bremen

The election for the parliament in Bremen held on 22 May was won by the SPD which has been in power in this state for 65 years. The election revealed the clear left-wing sympathies of the voters – left-wing parties extended the ranks of their supporters, whereas support for the parties from the 'middle class camp' fell. The tendencies visible in the whole country were also affirmed: a significant loss of voter confidence for the CDU and for the FDP, which did not even cross the electoral threshold, with the sustained popularity of the Green Party.

The election in Bremen was the fifth out of seven state elections planned for 2011. The results are not surprising despite the position – unprecedented on the national scale – of the Green Party which outperformed the Christian Democrats. Support for the CDU declined, whereas the popularity of the conservative protest party BIW (Bürger in Wut – Angry Citizen) grew and BIW will again have a representative in the state parliament.

Jens Böhrnsen, a popular SPD politician, will remain prime minister in Bremen and the Socialists will form the government with the Green Party for the second time. The positive election results for the coalition partners, despite the state's high debts and an unemployment rate of nearly 11% (against 7.3% in the whole country), is a token of support but also reveals the lack of a real alternative. This is proven by the declining turnover and an increase in support for BIW (by 2.9 percentage points in comparison with the election of 2007).

Bremen as a small state delegates only three representatives to the Bundesrat (the largest states have six representatives) and does not form an important political base for any of the large political parties. Therefore the election in this state is not as important on the federal level as in bigger states. Two subsequent elections in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Berlin will be more important from the point of view of politicians in Berlin. <zawil>