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Germany: a planned merger of the far right parties DVU and NPD

On 17 September, the spokesman for the DVU (German People's Union) announced the party leadership's consent to a merger with the larger and more popular NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany). The parties are to merge by the end of this year. The merger of the two parties will consolidate the far right political circles. However, this will not make the parties more popular, as they have discredited themselves in the eyes of the German public by making direct references to Nazi rhetoric.

The main reason behind the merger of the DVU and the NPD are the latter's financial problems. The problems occurred as a result of the imposition of a penalty on the NPD for errors in its financial statement for 2007 and, in consequence, the suspension of subsidies from the federal budget paid to parties which win at least 1% of the votes in local elections. The DVU, which has money, partly earned by real estate trading, will bring to the common budget approximately 250,000 euros. The DVU has a smaller share of voters support than the more radical NPD (respectively 0.1% and 1.5% support in parliamentary elections in 2009). At present, the DVU is represented in the parliament of Bremen, and the NPD has its MPs in the parliaments of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony. The NPD and the DVU also have numerous representations in local administration councils, especially in the four eastern federal states. The NPD managed to introduce a total of 121 representatives into those councils in 2009 alone.

Since both parties seek support from the same electorate, they entered a 'German pact' in 2005, as a consequence of which they refrained from putting forward competing candidates in eastern federal states, where they both enjoy the highest support. However, the NPD broke the alliance in 2009 and took part in the parliamentary elections in Brandenburg. However, both parties achieved poor results in the elections (preventing the DVU from re-entering parliament), which proved that there was not sufficient room on the German political scene for two parties so similar to each other. The merger of the NPD and the DVU will not increase their political significance at the federal level. However, this move may contribute to reinforcing their position in local parliaments and councils in eastern federal states. <zawil>