

# The Nationalists of the New Flemish Alliance wins the General Elections in Belgium

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## Results

The New Flemish Alliance (N-VA), the nationalist party led by Bart de Wever won the Belgian federal elections taking 20.33% of the vote and 33 seats (+6 in comparison with the same kind of election on 13th June 2010<sup>o</sup>). The N-VA came out ahead of the Flemish Democratic Christian Party (CD&V) led by Wouter Beke, which won 11.65% of the vote and 18 seats (+1); the Socialist Party (PS) of Prime Minister Elio di Rupo, led by Paul Magnette, won 11.64% of the vote and 24 seats (-2). The Flemish Liberals and Democrats (Open VLD), led by Gwendolyn Rutten, won 9.81% of the vote and 14 seats (+1), the Reform Movement (MR), Charles Michel's liberal party won 9.58% of the vote and 19 seats (+1); the Flemish Socialist Party (SP.A), led by Bruno Tobback, 8.86% of the vote and 13 seats (=) and the Humanist Democratic Centre (cdh) of Benoît Lutgen, 4.92% of the vote and 9 seats (=). The Flemish ecologists of Groen! chaired by Wouter Van Besien, won 5.34% of the vote and 6 seats (+ 1) and Ecolo, a French speaking party led jointly by Olivier Deleuze and Emily Hoyos, 3.26% of the vote and 6 seats (- 2), a clear decline. Ecolo, which is now considered to be a management party (which sometimes forms obscure political alliances) and no longer as a party of contest, did not succeed in attracting those disappointed by the Socialist Party and undeniably suffered due to the break through made by the far left.

The far right party Vlaams Belang (VB) chaired by Gerolf Annemans, is also clearly declining with 3.69% of the vote and 3 seats (- 9). The Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB), a Marxist-Leninist party led by Peter Mertens won 1.97% of the vote and made its debut in the Chamber of Representatives, the lower chamber of parliament with 2 seats. The French speaking Democratic Federalists (FDF) won 1.8% of the vote and 2 seats (+2). Finally the People's Party a populist movement led by Mischaël Modrikamen, won 1.52% of the vote and 1 seat (=).

Turnout totalled 88.5% ie 4.77 points less than in the previous general elections on 13th June 2010. It is obligatory to vote in Belgium.

The Belgian general elections were marred by the fatal attack on a Jewish Museum in Brussels which

led to the death of four people and several injured. "The democratic celebration has been darkened by yesterday's events which are in everyone's mind," declared Prime Minister Elio di Rupo after having voted in Mons.

### General elections results of 25th May 2014 in Belgium

Turnout: 88.50% (it is obligatory to vote in Belgium)

Political Parties	No of votes won	Percentage of votes won	No of seats won
<b>New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)</b>	1 350 742	20,33	33
<b>Socialist Party (PS)</b>	728 135	11,64	24
<b>Reform Movement (MR)</b>	601 799	9,58	19

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<b>Flemish Democratic Christian Party (CD&amp;V)</b>	773 599	11,65	18
<b>Flemish Liberals and Democrats (Open VLD)</b>	647 375	9,81	14
<b>Flemish Socialist Party (Sp.a)</b>	583 731	8.86	13
<b>Humanist Democratic Centre (cdH)</b>	312 658	4,92	9
<b>Groen!</b>	350 796	5,34	6
<b>Ecolo</b>	203 948	3,26	6
<b>Vlaams Belang (VB)</b>	243 925	3,69	3
<b>Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB)</b>	120 222	1,97	2
<b>French Speaking Federalist Democrats (FDF)</b>	112 265	1,8	2
<b>People's Party (PP)</b>	95 664	1,52	1
<b>Others</b>	361 993	5,60	0

Source : Internet Site of Libre Belgique (<http://www.lalibre.be/page/elections2014> )

Once more the N-VA is the grand victor in the Belgian general elections. The party has continued to syphon off the Vlaams Belang votes which is clearly on the decline and even threatened with extinction. "The N-VA has written a page in the history books, that of Flanders which wants to decide its own history," stressed Bart de Wever.

The Socialists lost ground in Wallonia and Brussels but remain Belgium's leading party (Socialist Party and Flemish Socialist Party together). It was however a personal failure for the outgoing head of government since he wanted to be judged in terms of a loss of vote on the part of N-VA in these general elections.

Bart de Wever, who indicated that institutional reforms should no longer be the priority of priorities, spoke ambiguously as the results were announced. "We do not want a long political crisis and therefore from a federal point of view we want to take the initiative to see what is possible," he indicated. He declared he wanted to start negotiations with the other parties but stressed that the Belgian political situation was "even more complicated now," before calling for the "protection of the interests of Flanders."

Just a few days before the general election on 25th May Bart de Wever posted a video on YouTube destined for the French speaking voters. "I want us all to move ahead, both French and Flemish speakers. We face different socio-economic issues which require specific solutions – we live in two different democracies, each based on its own set of political parties, media and institutions (...) I want to manage the structure of this country with this reality but above all I want to settle socio-economic issues," he maintained in French before concluding: "All I ask, all I hope is that you give me the benefit of the doubt."

A Belgian government which includes the N-VA but not the Socialists seems impossible, but a government allying Bart de Wever and Elio di Rupo seems just as unlikely "Bart De Wever as Prime Minister, that would be like giving the chicken coop to the fox to look after," maintained the outgoing Prime Minister Elio di Rupo who warned voters before the election and stressed that every vote for the N-VA was a "vote in support of the country's division." The Socialist Party leader Paul Magnette accused Bart de Wever of wanting to paralyse the country to show that the Flemish and French speakers could not live together.

On the same day MPs in the Chamber of Representatives (and European MPs) Belgians were also called to renew their regional representatives: 2.5 million Walloons voted for their regional parliament.

The N-VA won in Flanders with 31.90% of the vote followed by the Flemish Democratic Christian Party (20.50%) and the Flemish Liberals and Democrats (14.20% of the vote). In Wallonia, the Socialist Party won with 31% of the vote ahead of the Reform Movement (26.60% of the vote) and the Humanist Democratic Centre (15.10% of the vote). Finally in the region Brussels-Capital the Socialists won 23.50% of the vote and the Reform Movement (20.40% of the vote).

According to political analysts the Flemish nationalist leader Bart de Wever would first work towards forming a government for Flanders (an alliance between the N-CA and the Flemish Democratic Christian Party and also the Flemish Liberals and Democrats) to then be able to use this team to defend Flemish interests federally.

Everyone fears that Belgium will repeat the same post-election crisis of 13th June 2010 when it took 541 days for a government to be formed. In view of the results the formation of the next government coalition might prove long and difficult however.

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