

Outgoing Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic's Democratic Union (HDZ) wins the general election in Croatia

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Results

The wager made by outgoing Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic with regard to the Democratic Union (HDZ) was won in the parliamentary elections in Croatia on July 5. The party took 66 seats in the Hrvatski Sabor, the only chamber of parliament. The elections, originally scheduled for December, were brought forward by six months. The head of government had hoped to take advantage of the way he managed the health crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic which had boosted his popularity. This popularity might have found itself undermined by the economic crisis, which has now been forecast. The authorities also feared the development of a second wave of the epidemic in the autumn. Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic therefore chose the right strategy and managed to outrun the Social Democratic opposition, even though the two forces were neck and neck in the opinion polls.

The left-wing opposition *Coalition for a New Start*, led by Davor Bernardic's Social Democratic Party (SDP), which included Kreso Beljak's Farmers' Party (HSS) and Silvano Hrelja's Pensioners' Party (HSU), Goran Aleksic's

Civic Engagement and People's Party (Snaga), Anka Mrak Taritas' Liberal Civic Alliance (GLAS), Boris Miletic's Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS) won 41 seats.

The Patriotic Movement (Domovinski Pokret, DPMS), a right-wing populist party set up last February by Miroslav Skoro, allied with the Coalition of Sovereignists (an alliance formed for the European elections on May 26, 2019 by the Conservative Party (HKS), the Growth Bloc (Hrast), the Party of Rights-Dr Ante Starcevic (HSP-AS) and the United Patriots (UHD)) and with the Bloc for Croatia, came third with 16 elected members.

Most-Nezavisnih Lista (Independent Bridge Lists) of Bozo Petrov won 8 seats and the Green-Left Coalition, formed by We Can (Mozemo), the New Left (NL) and Sustainable Development of Croatia (ORaH), 7.

Turnout was lower than in the previous parliamentary elections of September 11, 2016. Less than one Croat in two (46.85%) went to the polls, albeit in exceptional circumstances (-7.5 points).

Results of the general election on July 5, 2020 in Croatia

Turnout: 46.85%

Political Parties	No of seats won
Democratic Union (HDZ)	66
Coalition for a new Start, led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP)	41
Patriotic Movement (Domovinski Pokret, DPMS)	16
Most-Nezavisnih Lista (Bridge-Independent Lists)	8
Left-Green Coalition	7
Others	13

Source : <https://www.izbori.hr/sabor2020/rezultati/1>

General Election in Croatia

05th July 2020

«We have had a difficult mandate and the challenges ahead might be even greater. This requires responsibility, experience and knowledge. A new government with a new mandate will be able to deal with the fallout from the unprecedented crisis caused by the coronavirus. In these difficult times for both public health and the economy, Croatia deserves to be led by experienced and responsible people. Croatia is facing serious challenges that demand responsibility, know-how and experience. This is exactly what we have proposed to the Croatian electorate.»[1] said outgoing Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic during the election campaign. The head of government and his party, the HDZ, have emerged from the vote stronger.

«They are in a rather comfortable position now as they will be able to choose their partners and may not have to negotiate with their opponents on the right of the political spectrum,» said Berto Salaj, professor of political science at the University of Zagreb. Dragan Bagic, a sociologist at the same institution, pointed out: *«What started out as a long, uncertain night has turned into a short period with an undeniable result. There are various scenarios, but this majority will be controlled by the Democratic Union and it will essentially be a government led by Andrej Plenkovic».*

[1] The European Commission predicts a 9.10% drop in Croatian GDP in 2020 while the country traditionally has experienced growth rates above 2.50%.

The outgoing Prime Minister's party might enter into negotiations with the Patriotic Movement of Miroslav Skoro, but it is not necessarily in Skoro's interest to take office. *«We can be happy: fifty days after our creation, we are already the third largest political force in Croatia. Some expected more, a miracle. However, you have to be realistic when you do politics, and I am realistic,»* declared the former singer.

«We are proposing clear changes for a new start for Croatia,» the SDP leader said during the campaign. Davor Bernardic, who offered to resign on the announcement of the disappointing results for his party - did not succeed in convincing his compatriots. The party failed in the parliamentary elections for the third time in a row. What is more, it lost its stronghold, Zagreb, to the Left Green Coalition.

Political analysts explain the defeat of the social-democratic left by the presence of the Left Green Coalition, which succeeded in winning over some of the voters, particularly in the capital, which was hit by an earthquake on March 22 last. Many of them have also criticised the SDP leader Davor Bernardic for his lack of charisma.

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