

European
Elections monitor

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RESULTS

Frank-Walter Steinmeier re-elected President of the Federal Republic of Germany

Unsurprisingly, Frank-Walter Steinmeier was re-elected as President of the Federal Republic of Germany on 13 February in the first round of voting. The outgoing head of state received 1,045 votes, or 78.04% of the votes (308 votes more than the absolute majority required in the first two rounds) of the German Federal Assembly (Bundesversammlung). He beat his three opponents: Max Otte, running under the Alternative for Germany (AfD) label, an economist and former professor, obtained 140 votes (10.45%); Gerhard Trabert, professor of medicine, an independent candidate but supported by the Left Party (Die Linke, DL), received 96 votes (7.17%); and Stefanie Gebauer, an astrophysicist and a candidate of the Free Voters (FW), a centre-right party, obtained 58 votes (4.33%).

The President of the Federal Republic of Germany is elected by the Federal Assembly ([Bundesversammlung](#)), which this year comprised 1 472 members: the 736 members of the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament, and an equal number of elected representatives from the country's sixteen Länder, members of regional parliaments and prominent members of civil society.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier was supported by the vast majority of German political parties represented in the Bundestag: Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democratic Party (SPD), from which he originated, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP), the Greens/Alliance 90 (Bündnis 90, die Grünen) and the Federation of South Schleswig Voters (SSW), the party of the Danish minority in the state

of Schleswig-Holstein. It is a German tradition that a President of the Republic who aspires to a second term in office receives the support of all, including parties that did not support him in his first election.

"I will be above the parties. Be assured of that. On the other hand, I will not remain neutral as far as democracy is concerned. I will stand by those who want to defend it but I will be the opponent of those who want to attack it (...) I appeal to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Loosen the noose around Ukraine's neck and seek a solution with us to safeguard peace in Europe. The danger of a military conflict, of a war in the east of the continent threatens us. Russia is responsible for this (...) I can only warn the Russian President, Vladimir Putin: Do not underestimate the power of democracy!" said Frank-Walter Steinmeier after his re-election. He also criticised Russia for threatening Europe with an armed conflict in Ukraine.

With the re-election of Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Social Democrats now hold the three most important posts in Germany: the presidency, the chancellery (Olaf Scholz) and the presidency of the Bundestag (Bärbel Bas).

Frank-Walter Steinmeier is 66 years old and comes from Detmold (North Rhine-Westphalia). After graduating in law, he joined the Social Democratic Party. In the early 1990s, he worked with Gerhard Schröder (SPD), then Minister-President of Lower Saxony. He became State Secretary and Director of the Lower Saxony Chancellery and followed Gerhard Schröder when he became Chancellor after the parliamentary elections of 27 September 1998. The

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following year, Frank-Walter Steinmeier was appointed head of cabinet at the chancellery. He was one of the architects of Gerhard Schröder's most important reforms, known as the Agenda 2010 (pension, health and labour market reforms).

He specialised in foreign policy, which led Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU), who succeeded Gerhard Schröder in 2005, to appoint him as Foreign Minister. In 2009, Frank-Walter Steinmeier led the SPD list in the legislative elections of 27 September. He suffered a severe defeat, with the SPD obtaining its lowest result since the end of the Second World War with 23% of the vote. He was nevertheless appointed chairman of his party in the Bundestag, a post he gave up for a few months to donate one of his kidneys to his wife,

the administrative judge Elke Büdenbender, who was seriously ill and awaiting an organ transplant, a gesture that made Frank-Walter Steinmeier very popular with his compatriots.

At the end of 2013, he returned to his post as Foreign Minister, which he held until January 2017. On 12 February 2017, he was elected President of the Federal Republic of Germany, succeeding Joachim Gauck, who had chosen not to stand for re-election. On 13 February 2022, the outgoing head of state, who was the great favourite in the election, was elected for a second and final five-year term, as the German Constitution does not allow him to serve more than two consecutive terms.

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