

# Victory for the rightwing and breakthrough for the Sweden Democrats (SD) are now the second largest party following the parliamentary elections

For the first time in the country's history - but as has happened in previous elections in Europe - Swedes were unable to tell at the end of the vote whether the left or the right had won the 11 September general elections. The gap between the two sides of the political spectrum was so small that the Swedish Electoral Commission only released the results on 14 September.

According to the final results, the right-wing forces, comprising the populist Sweden Democrats (SD) led by Jimmie Akesson, the Moderate Party (M) led by Ulf Kristersson, the Christian Democrats (KD) led by Ebba Busch Thor and the Liberals (L) led by Johan Pehrson, will together win 49.5 % of the vote and 176 seats.

The left-wing forces, which include the Social Democratic Party (SAP) led by outgoing Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson, the Left Party (V) led by Nooshi Dadgostar, the Green-Environment Party (MP) represented by Per Bolund and Märta Stenevi and the Centre Party (C) led by Annie Lööf, are expected to win 48.88% of the vote (about 600,000 less than their opponents) and 173 seats.

The Swedish specificity means that to be invested as Prime Minister, he/she does not necessarily have to obtain an absolute majority in his/her favour: he/she only has to be rejected by an absolute majority of MPs (175).

The Social Democrats (SAP) achieved a strong result and came out on top with 30.49% of the vote and 8 additional members. The Sweden Democrats (SD) came second with 20.6% and gained 3 seats. The Greens won 2 seats. The Centre Party (C) lost the most seats (-7), the Left Party lost 4, as did the Liberals, the Christian Democrats 3 and the Moderate Party, 2.

Turnout, always high in Sweden, was lower than in the last general election on 9 September 2018, totalling 80.62%, -6.56 points than four years ago.

Results of the Swedish general elections of 11 September 2022

Turnout: 80.62%

Political Parties	Number of votes won	% of votes won	Number of seats
<b>Social Democratic Party (SAP)</b>	1 892 402	30.3	107
<b>Sweden Democrats (SD)</b>	1 280 086	20.5	73
<b>Moderate Party (M)</b>	1 183 239	19.1	68
<b>Centre Party (C)</b>	415 880	6.7	24
<b>Left Party (V)</b>	412 636	6.7	24
<b>Christian Democrats (KD)</b>	332 542	5.3	19
<b>Environment Party-Greens (MP)</b>	312 890	5.1	18
<b>The Liberals (L)</b>	285 022	4.6	16
<b>Others</b>	92 270	1.5	0

Source: <https://resultat.val.se/val2022/slutlig/RD/rike>

The Sweden Democrats have made a breakthrough and are now the country's second largest party. The populist right-wing movement, which garnered 2.93% of the vote in the 2006 general elections and 5.7% in 2010, became the third largest party with 17.53% in the general elections of 9 September 2018. It exceeded 40% of the vote in several municipalities in the south of the country. *"I think our success is due to the fact that people don't feel that other parties take their situation seriously,"* said party leader Jimmy Akesson last August. SD chose the phrase *"Not like the other parties"* as its election campaign slogan.

In Sweden, the post of Prime Minister traditionally goes to the leader of the main party in the winning alliance. Ulf Kristersson, leader of the Moderate Party (M), knows that his only chance of governing is in an alliance with the Sweden Democrats (SD), but during the campaign he ruled out SD's participation in a government with him as Prime Minister, presumably

thinking that he could lead the country with SD's support in parliament and not in government. However, the SD result changes the situation, and it will now be difficult to refuse their participation in the government while counting on their support. Even if the Moderates form a government without the SD, Jimmie Akesson will hold significant sway over the future government coalition.

*The cordon sanitaire* between the moderate right-wing forces and the populists was broken on 20 January 2020 when Ulf Kristersson declared he was ready to cooperate with the Sweden Democrats because, in his opinion, of their positive development in recent years. According to a recent opinion poll, two thirds of Moderate Party voters (64%) and four fifths of Christian Democrats (78%) are in favour of SD joining the government.

In November 2021, the right-wing parties presented a joint budget with the Sweden Democrats, which was adopted by the Riksdag, the single chamber of parliament, since Magdalena Andersson's minority government was prevented from passing its own bill. Last June, the Sweden Democrats initiated a motion of censure against the Minister of the Interior and Justice, Morgan Johansson (SAP), accused of being lax in dealing with organised crime, a scourge that has grown in recent years in a country unaccustomed to such violence. SD again tried to bring down the government a few weeks before the 11 September elections and thus generate a political crisis. Supported by all the right-wing forces, the party nevertheless failed by one vote.

*"Never before have we had a Swedish election campaign in which we discussed law and order, the fight against crime as much as we have this year,"* said Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson, professor of political science at the University of Gothenburg. Indeed, the election campaign has been dominated by insecurity, a theme that the Sweden Democrats link to immigration. *"Mass immigration has brought us a new and brutal gang culture,"* said Jimmy Akesson.

*"No matter how hard the Social Democrats try and move to the right, the gap between them still exists, they will always be seen as more permissive or more*

*generous, depending on where you stand,"* said Karl-Oskar Lindgren, a political scientist at Uppsala University.

*"Inflation has risen, as have crime and shootings, and these are factors that are most likely to benefit the right-wing opposition,"* said Patrik Öhberg, professor of political science at the University of Gothenburg.

Since the beginning of 2022, 44 people have been killed by firearms in Sweden (46 for the whole of 2021), a record in Europe. According to the Institute for Society, Opinion and Media at the University of Gothenburg, for the first time, this type of crime is the Swedes' primary source of concern (41%). *"We no longer recognise our Sweden,"* said outgoing Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson a few weeks ago.

Outgoing Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson, acknowledged the victory of the right bloc which holds *"a small majority, but nevertheless a majority"* during a [press conference](#) on 14 September. She announced her resignation on 15 September. She will lead a [caretaker government](#) until the next government has been formed.

Sweden will take over the presidency of the Council of the European Union from the Czech Republic on 1 January 2023.

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