

# ...No clear victor in Spanish election as results defy predictions

By Jack Guy and [Al Goodman](#), CNN

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Marcos del Mazo/LightRocket/Getty Images

A woman votes in Madrid on Sunday.

**(CNN)** — [Spain](#) appears destined for painful political negotiations after [Sunday's elections](#), when no single party won enough parliamentary seats to form a government. Prospects for coalition-building now remain uncertain.

With over 99% of the vote counted, the center-right Partido Popular (PP) is set to come in first, winning 136 seats. The upstart far-right Vox party, a possible coalition partner to PP, is forecast to win 33 seats.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's ruling center-left Socialist party meanwhile is on course to win 122 seats, with likely coalition partners Sumar at 31 seats.



Oscar del Pozo/AFP/Getty Images

Supporters outside the PP headquarters waiting for election results.

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In order to govern, a party or coalition must achieve a working majority of 176 seats in the 350-seat legislature.

PP leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo said he was “very proud” during a speech at party headquarters, lauding the fact that his party’s vote share increased from 21% to 33%.



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Despite a party-like atmosphere at the PP headquarters, supporters of the opposition party told CNN they had expected a clearer victory.

“We thought we would get much more,” said Mercedes González, an English professor in Madrid.

And Fernando del Rio, a 21-year-old web designer from Madrid, also said he

was dissatisfied. “People spoke against the socialist government, but that didn’t materialize in votes,” he said.

Outside the Socialist party headquarters, meanwhile, supporters were upbeat.

Agustin Saludes, 64, a civil servant in pre-retirement, told CNN that he felt happy with the results. “Because we didn’t expect to get so many votes. We thought we would lose. It was a tough campaign against Sanchez,” he said.

“(Sanchez) has to make deals with the pro-independence parties in Catalonia and the Basque Country to win investiture,” Saludes added.

## **A political gamble**

Calling Sunday’s vote was a political gamble for Sanchez, after his party suffered major setbacks in regional and local elections in May. The PP that month made huge gains, amid a surge toward the right in European politics across the continent.

Most polls predicted that PP would win the most votes on Sunday, but fall short of an absolute majority in Parliament, meaning it would likely have to form a coalition with the far-right Vox party.

Such an arrangement would have courted controversy by ushering a far-right party enter government for the first time in decades. But Sunday’s nailbiting vote count offered no easy path for a rightwing coalition to be formed.

Vox which backs policies that would roll back equality protections for women and LGBTQ people, ultimately lost some seats in Sunday’s vote, down from the 52 it won in the last election.

Several smaller regional parties are also set to win seats, of which several have previously lent support to Sanchez’s government.

Andres Villena, a professor at Madrid’s Complutense University, told CNN before the vote that in calling the elections Sanchez made “a complex chess move,” and may have aimed to outmaneuver Feijóo, a longtime regional president in northwest Spain who has only been in charge of the national party since April 2022 and is untested in a national election.

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During his time in government Sanchez has pushed a progressive agenda, including policies on women's rights and a euthanasia law. These reforms won votes in urban areas, but the pace of change has also led to a backlash in other parts of the country.



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It could now be weeks until the country's path forward becomes clearer, with inter-party negotiations and meetings involving King Felipe VI of Spain still to come as parties vie to form a government.