

Beat: Politics

Conservatives maintains Galicia and the nationalism maintains the Basque Country

Regional elections in both territories

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USPA NEWS - Two historical regions of Spain - Galicia and the Basque Country - held elections on Sunday, July 12. In both, the favorites won: in Galicia, with an absolute majority, and in the Basque Country with a majority but in need of pacts to govern. The Galicians gave their fourth absolute majority to the conservative candidate of the Popular Party and president of the regional government for 12 years, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, while the Basques opted for the conservative nationalist party PNV (Spanish acronym for the Basque Nationalist Party), whose candidate he was the current president of the regional government, Iñigo Urkullu.

In Galicia, the Popular Party (PP in its Spanish acronym) obtained 41 seats, while the Galician Nationalist Block (BNG) was second with 19 seats and the Socialist Party of Galicia (PsdG), third with 15 seats. The PP achieved one more seat than four years ago, just like the PsdG, but the great winner of the elections was the Galician Nationalist Block, which tripled its result four years earlier when collecting the disenfranchised votes of the extreme left represented by Unidas Podemos (United We Can) and its confluences. Said extreme left and the centrist Citizens party disappear from the Galician Parliament.

More distributed was the result in the Basque Country, where the PNV achieved 31 seats, ahead of the ultra-nationalist coalition EH-Bildu, with 22 seats; of the Basque Socialist Party, with 10 seats; Unidas Podemos, with 6 seats; from the center-left PP-Citizens coalition, with 5 seats; and the far-right VOX party, which for the first time managed to get a representative in the Basque Parliament. Here, the PNV will reissue its government coalition with the Socialist Party of the Basque Country, which this Monday was presented as the containment dam against the power of EH-Bildu.

In both regions, the far-left coalition Unidas Podemos was the big loser. In four years, it has squandered its electoral capital. As a result of the union between Podemos, the Izquierda Unida (United Left) coalition - the former Communist Party of Spain - and various far-left feminist regional parties, the coalition arrived in 2014 with the banner of political regeneration and the honesty of politicians. Very soon, its leader, Pablo Iglesias, criticized the then Minister of Economy, the conservative Luis de Guindos, for spending 600,000 euros in a luxury penthouse in Madrid and in a tweet asked if "would you hand over the economic policy of the country to whom spend 600,000 euros on a luxury penthouse?" A few months later, Iglesias himself and his wife, the current Minister of Equality, Irene Montero, paid 615,000 euros for a house in an exclusive area of the Madrid municipality of Galapagar.

In detail, it did not go unnoticed by the Spanish media and social networks. But it was only the first of a series of behaviors that, far from regenerating politics, copied the worst vices of Spanish politicians. The illusion that Podemos aroused in many socialist voters led this party to be the third most voted force in the 2015 legislative elections, with 69 deputies, only behind the PP, with 123 deputies, and the Socialist Party, with 90 deputies. And to be the second force in Galicia in 2016, only behind the PP. Four years later, Unidas Podemos leaves the Galician Parliament, where from now on there will only be three parties: PP, BNG and PsdG.

In the Basque Country, in 2016, Podemos was the third most voted political force, behind PNV and EH-Bildu. After this Sunday's elections, it is the fourth force of the regional Parliament. The leaders of Podemos recognized on Sunday night the bad result obtained by their coalition: "It is a failure," said a spokesman for Podemos in Galicia. But it is also a failure for the Socialist Party, which has failed to collect the votes of Podemos. On the contrary, these votes have gone to feed the nationalist parties.

Many analysts on Monday interpreted the electoral results in Galicia and the Basque Country as punishment for the government coalition chaired by the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro SÁnchez, for its management of the pandemic by COVID-19. And they stressed the importance of the debacle of the extreme left, since Podemos has a vice-president and four ministers in the Government of Spain. The policy of concealment of those killed by the pandemic, erratic decisions, poor management of health resources and, above all, attacks on the media and threats against journalists by Vice President Pablo Iglesias would be at the origin of the loss of confidence of the Galicians and Basques in the Socialist Party and in Podemos.

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