

What might the German Election mean for Brexit?

Written by Alexander Fiuza on 22 September 2017



With Angela Merkel pressured to be more, and not less, accommodating towards the UK, the chances of Britain reaching a good deal with Brussels are far higher | *Photo credit: Press Association*

This Sunday, 24 September, Germany will vote for its new Federal Government. This could have serious ramifications for Brexit negotiations as the victor will take control of German foreign policy.

As Germany is the largest economy in Europe and the more powerful of the Franco-German axis which dominates EU politics, their foreign policy matters.

The broad outcome looks fairly set. Former Eurocrat Martin Schulz's Social Democrats (SPD) ran Angela Merkel and her centrist Christian Democrats (CDU) party close for a brief period, but the former European Parliament president's poll numbers have tumbled from just above 30 per cent to barely over 20 per cent, following disappointing regional elections and a gruelling campaign.

RELATED CONTENT

- [Theresa May has been urged to be bold and ambitious in her speech on Brexit in Italy on Friday.](#) [1]
 - [Brexit: Citizens' rights campaigners to greet Theresa May in Florence](#) [2]
 - [Tajani: May must use Florence speech to present concrete proposals](#) [3]
 - [Mixed response to radical proposals to cut the number of European Parliament seats after Brexit](#) [4]
 - [Gianni Pittella: EU is successfully reinventing itself](#) [5]
 - [Manfred Weber: UK still thinks it can cherry pick in Brexit talks](#) [6]
 - [Jean-Claude Juncker: EU has window of opportunity to reform itself](#) [7]
-

Despite disappointing debate performances dragging her poll numbers down from around 40 per cent to around 36 per cent, Merkel is still on track to trounce Schulz. This is a very good thing – Schulz hates Brexit far more than Merkel, and would do his best to punish Britain. Merkel is more pragmatic.

Under the German system of proportional representation, however, Merkel is unlikely to win a majority - despite likely winning with a margin of over 10 per cent. So, what are the likely outcomes of the German election? And what will they mean for Brexit negotiations and subsequently the UK?

The key to this question is Merkel's coalition partner. This partner would need to have won over 10 per cent of the vote to give their coalition a majority. With four parties vying for third place, it's worth looking at the options for who Angela Merkel would jump into bed with.

Despite speculation, the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) - a party of the Eurosceptic right - would not be an option for Merkel. Although a remarkably upbeat campaign has seen them surge into third place with up to 12 per cent, almost every German party has ruled out working with them, including the CDU.

Their presence in Parliament may push Merkel to the right on immigration and somewhat curb her enthusiasm for the EU, but their influence will be minor outside of Government.

"Despite speculation, the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) - a party of the Eurosceptic right - would not be an option for Merkel. Although a remarkably upbeat campaign has seen them surge into third place with up to 12 per cent, almost every German party has ruled out working with them, including the CDU"

Die Linke, a rag-tag coalition of former communist apparatchiks and disillusioned SPD headbangers polling at around 10 per cent, would not work with the CDU in the first place, and the CDU would not work with them.

This leaves two – the Free Democrats (FDP), a centre-right classical liberal party polling also at around 10 per cent, and the left-wing Greens polling a few point behind at around 8 per cent. Merkel has had coalitions with both in the past, and has expressed willingness to do so again.

The CDU working with the Greens - a so-called Black-Green coalition - would mean nothing good for Brexit negotiations. German Greens, like British Greens, are dominated by arch Europhiles intent on harming Britain. They would quieten Merkel's relatively pragmatic voice in Brussels, reducing the chances of a good deal for Britain and the EU.

A Black-Yellow coalition between the CDU and the FDP, on the other hand, would be good news. The FDP leader, Christian Lindner, has spoken out about the importance of getting a good deal with the UK.

As someone who understands the importance of British trade in goods and services, his influence would push Merkel to a friendlier place on Brexit. With Merkel pressured to be more, and not less, accommodating towards the UK, the chances of Britain reaching a good deal with Brussels are far higher.

Any coalition with third parties may fall a few seats short of a majority. With the remainder split between the AfD and assorted leftist parties, the minority coalition could probably pass its agenda anyway. Merkel may not want to risk it, however, or to make the AfD kingmakers.

"If the AfD gains too much at the expense of the CDU however, Germany could have another four years of grand coalition, to the detriment of EU-UK relations"

These concerns could push Merkel to seek a safer coalition – another grand coalition with the SPD. Given Schulz's attitudes, this would be as bad, perhaps worse, than a coalition with the Greens, pushing Merkel to try and punish Britain.

There's all to play for in the race to be Merkel's coalition partner after the German elections. A triumphant CDU in coalition with the FDP and pressured by the AfD is probably the best result to help Get Britain Out of the EU smoothly.

If the AfD gains too much at the expense of the CDU however, Germany could have another four years of grand coalition, to the detriment of EU-UK relations. On Sunday, the big picture will be clear, but the future of Germany and the EU at large will rest in the details.

About the author

Alexander Fiuza is a Research Executive at grassroots Eurosceptic campaign Get Britain Out

Tags

[Brexit](#) [8]

[Refugee crisis](#) [9]

[Foreign Affairs](#) [10]

Categories

[International Relations](#) [11]



Site Sections

- [Home](#)

- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [EU Elections 2019](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[CompanionVacher's](#)
[Quarterly The](#)
[European Union and](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster](#)
[BriefingDigital](#)
[Health & Care](#)
[ScotlandMEP](#)
[AwardsThe Skills](#)
[SummitScottish](#)
[Public Service](#)
[AwardsPublic Sector](#)
[Procurement](#)

[SummitPublic](#)
[Sector ICT](#)
[SummitCyber](#)
[Security](#)
[SummitCyber](#)
[Security](#)
[2017Training](#)
[Journal Awards](#)

Partnership events

[The Health and
Care Innovation
ExpoCivil Service](#)
[LiveCivil Service](#)
[AwardsChief](#)
[Nursing Officer for
England's](#)
[SummitWomen into
LeadershipThe](#)
[Youth Justice](#)
[ConventionSocitm](#)
[Spring](#)
[ConferenceNHSCC](#)
[Annual Members'](#)
[EventDods at Party](#)
[Conference](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)[Terms & Conditions](#)[Advertising](#)[Sponsorship](#) [Subscriptions](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/blog/what-might-german-election-mean-brexit>

Links

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/meps-offer-theresa-may-some-ideas-florence-speech>
[2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/brexit-citizens-rights-campaigners-greet-theresa-may-florence>
[3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/tajani-may-must-use-florence-speech-present-concrete-proposals>

- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/mixed-response-radical-proposals-cut-number-european-parliament-seats-after-brex>
- [5] <http://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/gianni-pittella-eu-successfully-reinventing-itself>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/manfred-weber-uk-still-thinks-it-can-cherry-pick-brex-talks>
- [7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/jean-claude-juncker-eu-has-window-opportunity-reform-itself>
- [8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/brex>
- [9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/refugee-crisis>
- [10] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/foreign-affairs>
- [11] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/international-relations>