Pan-European party Volt wins first seat in EU Parliament

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News

Formed in 2017, its German co-founder Damian Boeselager will represent the party in parliament

Photo Credit: Volt Party

New European party Volt is celebrating after winning its first seat in the European elections, which it described as a "huge victory."

Its German co-founder, Damian Boeselager, will represent the party in parliament.

The party polled highest in Germany with 248,824 votes, by far its best showing in the eight EU countries it contested the elections.

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Volt, formed just two years ago after the EU Referendum in the UK, also polled 105,923 votes, 1.9 per cent of the vote, in the Netherlands, 41,959 in Sweden (1.1percent) and 32,291 votes in Spain (0.14percent).

The party, which describes itself as a grassroots movement rather than a political party, also contested the EU wide poll in Luxembourg, Belgium, Bulgaria and the UK.

It claimed to be the "first party to participate in the same programme in several EU Member States."

> "With this seat, Volt is committed to all Europeans. This is an important first step to reform the EU so that it is there for all residents" **Damian Boeselager, Volt MEP**

On Wednesday, Boeselager told this website, "With this seat, Volt is committed to all Europeans. This is an important first step to reform the EU so that it is there for all residents."

Further comment came from Christophe Calis, leader of Volt in Belgium, who said, "We see this as a huge milestone for European democracy.

Volt supporters from different countries will now see that they will get a voice in the European Parliament. This is a huge milestone for European democracy."

In the coming weeks, the party says it will decide which grouping to join in parliament. It fielded 146 candidates and is active in all member states as well as Albania and Switzerland.

It says it is the first "citizen-led and pan-European political party, as an alternative to traditional and nationalist forces."

Since 2017, the movement has grown to approximately 10,000 active members across Europe, and 30,000 supporters.

> "There has been no continent-wide shift to far-right or anti-European parties, but the electorate is crying out for change" **Mark Leonard, European Council on Foreign Relations**

Meanwhile, more reaction has come in to the outcome of the elections, which are widely seen as a major victory for the Greens and Liberals.

Both won substantially more seats than in 2014, although there were also some modest gains for populist parties in the UK, France, Italy and Poland.

Christian Feustel, senior policy adviser at the Brussels-based BusinessEurope, said, "There has been a lot of talk about the rise of populists and right-wing parties."

"Yes, they have been strengthened, but the landslide EU victory, predicted by some, has not happened. Their influence on EU policies will be contained if pro-European forces work together."

More comment came from Mark Leonard, director of the European Council on Foreign Relations, who said, "Contrary to predictions, there has been no continent-wide shift to far-right or anti-European parties, but the electorate is crying out for change."

Elsewhere, Janis Emmanouilidis, director of studies at the European Policy Centre, a leading think tank, commented, "The two big parties suffered big losses on Sunday so there will now have to be lots of compromises on all sides."

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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