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Portugal

Left Bloc wins local representatives

- News from around the world -

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In the Portuguese local elections of October 9, the basic results point out to an electoral disaster for the PS (Socialist Party), the reinforcement of the PSD (Social Democratic Party) and PCP (Communist Party), and a significant increase in votes for the Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc). The results point out to an important and justified dissatisfaction with the current policies of José Socrates' Socialist government.

In general, it is important to highlight the victories of populism in Gondomar, Oeiras and Felgueiras, where the mayors (elected four years ago by the PS and the PSD) - who are being charged in various corruption trials - were re-elected with absolute majorities after being turned down by their parties, and standing in the elections on "citizens' lists".

The local elections in Portugal elect three representative bodies: the Council (Câmara Municipal, an executive body where you can have deputy mayors in the opposition), the Local Parliament (Assembleia Municipal, the council's parliament) and the County Parliament (Assembleia de Freguesia, a deliberative body corresponding to smaller territorial units, like districts).

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/blococonferencehall2.jpg>]

The Left Bloc had candidates for 120 councils (almost twice the number of the last municipal elections, corresponding to 85% of the population). During the campaign the organization proved to be more established and capable of developing a campaign around specific popular demands, involving large sectors of the left in each council. Overall, the result is positive.

The Bloc won almost three times more votes as last time (212,000 in 2005 against 80,000 in 2001). On the whole, the organisation now has 352 local representatives against 78 in 2001. It kept an absolute majority in the small, rural Salvaterra de Magos Council. Left Bloc deputies represent areas across the whole country, from the large metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto, to the districts with bigger population concentration as Santarém, Setúbal, Braga, Algarve, Madeira, Aveiro, Coimbra and others in councils of the interior like Mirandela.

The Left Bloc won a victory in Lisbon, with the election of Sá Fernandes as oppositional deputy mayor, but suffered a disappointing defeat in Porto, where the Teixeira Lopes was not elected. In both cases, the percentages attained for the local parliaments are higher than the ones obtained in the recent legislative elections.

The Left Bloc emerges from these local elections as a national organization, capable of involving thousands of people in its activities, and recognized as the most efficient voice in the opposition to the social-liberal government. It is in this framework that we are facing the next electoral challenge, in January: the presidential elections.

Francisco Louçã, the best-known "bloquista" leader, is the candidate for a "new time" in elections marked by the presence of politicians of the past. The right is concentrated around Cavaco Silva (prime-minister 1985-1995, defeated presidential candidate in 1996).

The PS is divided in the "brothers quarrel" between Mário Soares (80 years old, President of the Republic 1986-1996) and Manuel Alegre (an old time SPer). The PCP is standing its secretary-general, the deep traditionalist Jerónimo de Sousa.

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[See results at Left Bloc site](#)