

GERMANY'S CRISIS: Now anti-migrant AfD become second largest party in shock poll

GERMANY'S anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) has overtaken the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) for the first time in a national poll to become the second-strongest party, an Insa survey.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) gained 2.5 percentage points to reach 32 percent and the AfD was up one percentage point to 16 percent, the weekly poll for mass-selling Bild on Monday.

The SPD fell one percentage point to 15.5 percent.

Nearly five months after the national election, Germany is still without a federal government as the SPD consults its members before embarking on a re-run of their 'grand coalition' with Merkel's conservative bloc.

The election saw Alexander Gauland's AfD party win seats in parliament for the first time - a political earthquake that followed Mrs Merkel's 2015 decision to leave open German borders to more than 1 million migrants.



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Alexander Gauland's AfD is now the second biggest party behind Angela Merkel's CDU

The poll comes as the CDU starts to think about Mrs Merkel's successor.

German Chancellor Mrs Merkel put forward close ally Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer today to take over as secretary general of her CDU, heeding calls from within the party to inject new blood and groom a successor.

Mrs Merkel, who was CDU secretary general before becoming chancellor, said Mrs Kramp-Karrenbauer, premier of the tiny western state of Saarland, would bring "a lot of weight" to the role in what she called "difficult times, uncertain times".

A survey by pollster Emnid for Bild am Sonntag showed support for the SPD down one percentage point on the week at 19 percent, with Mrs Merkel's CDU/CSU bloc also down one point, at 33 percent.

The AfD party was up two points at 14 percent, the Greens steady at 11 percent, the radical Left party up one point on 10 percent, and the business-friendly Free Democrats steady on nine points, the poll showed.

The Emnid poll comes come as leading SPD mayors favour joining a coalition government with Mrs Merkel's conservatives, a poll showed on Sunday, boosting the prospects of the centre-left party backing the alliance in a ballot starting this week.

The SPD's 464,000 members vote in a postal ballot from Tuesday on whether their party should go ahead with the coalition agreement its leaders clinched this month to renew their alliance with Mrs Merkel's CDU/CSU bloc.

Newspaper Bild am Sonntag polled the mayors of the 35 biggest towns and cities ruled by the SPD and found that 26 of them said they would back the so-called 'grand coalition' - a re-run of the ruling alliance in power since 2013.

Of the other nine mayors, seven declined to give a view and two could not be reached, the newspaper reported.

Mrs Merkel turned to the SPD after her efforts to secure an alliance with the Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats failed in November. She had to make painful concessions to the SPD to break months of political deadlock after

an inconclusive election on September 24.

(Additional reporting by Monika Pallenberg.)

Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/920981/Germany-poll-latest-AfD-SPD-anti-migration-Angela-Merkel>

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