

Swedish Democrats

The trend on the continent to the destruction of the main centre left and centre right parties continues apace. The Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats in most countries have lost their supremacy as leading parties capable of polling well and even forming majority governments. That is so pre Euro and twentieth century.

Sweden still has a government led by the Social Democrats, though it is a minority administration that needs the good will of a number of opposition parties to allow it to pass a budget and stay in office, even with its coalition partners the Greens making it a larger minority. The latest polls for the forthcoming General Election show a strong spurt in the performance of the Swedish Democrats, a populist anti immigration party. The other parties regard the Swedish Democrats as unacceptable and wish to keep them out of government. Polling at 20% in the latest surveys, the SD remain around 5% below the Social Democrats.

Italy has established a government out of the Lega and Five Star, two challenger parties that did better than the Socialists and Forza, itself a remodelled centre right party to displace the Christian Democrats more than twenty years ago. Spain still has a Socialist led government, but in a minority and needing to do deals with the challenger parties to get anything through.

So what do these new parties want? They want some relaxation of EU budget controls. Several of them want a reduction in migration into the EU and a change of policy towards economic migrants. Many will be happy to stay with the EU but want it substantially reformed, whilst others think the EU is a big part of the problem and openly campaign to quit the Euro or leave the EU altogether.

The EU needs to think carefully how it responds to these mass movements. So far the Commission seems to think it can just ignore these elections. Even more bizarre is the way traditional parties just accept their fate and do nothing to get back in touch with voters as that would require standing up to the EU.