

Sweden election: far right makes gains as main blocs deadlocked

Notes & Cues:	Article: <p>Sweden faces a protracted period of political uncertainty after an election that left the two main parliamentary blocs tied but well short of a majority, and the far-right Sweden Democrats promising to wield “real influence” in parliament despite making more modest gains than many had predicted.</p> <p>The populist, anti-immigrant party won 17.6% of the vote, according to preliminary official results – well up on the 12.9% it scored in 2014, but far below the 25%-plus some polls had predicted earlier in the summer. It looked highly likely, however, to play a significant role as kingmaker.</p> <p>The election was Sweden’s first since the government allowed 163, 000 migrants into the country – the most per capita of any European nation – during Europe’s 2015 migration crisis, polarising the nation’s 7.3 million voters and magnifying popular concern about a welfare system many felt was already under strain.</p> <p>Far-right parties have made significant gains at the expense of the political mainstream across western Europe in recent years in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis and the 2015 refugee crisis, and are now in government in Italy, Austria, Norway and Finland.</p> <p>“Traditional parties have failed to respond to the sense of discontent that exists, ” said Magnus Blomgren of Umea University. “That discontent maybe isn’t directly related to unemployment or the economy, but simply a loss of faith in the political system. Sweden isn’t alone in this.”</p>
Summary:	