

《德执政党拿下社民党 " 核心州 " 默克尔四连任有戏》



German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks during an election rally in Aachen, Germany, May 13, 2017. [Photo/Agencies]

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BERLIN - Exit polls showed on Sunday that German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union(CDU) won North Rhine-Westphalia state election.

According to initial projections made by German local media ZDF and ARD, CDU secures 34.3 to 34.4 percent of the votes while the Social Democratic Party(SPD) lag behind, getting 30.6 percent of the votes.

Free Democratic Party (FDP) gets 11.9 to 12.2 percent and the right-wing Alternative for Germany(AFD) receives 7.6 to 7.7 percent. The Greens follows with 6.0 percent and the Left Party with 5.0 percent.

Sunday's vote was the last state election before the federal election set for Sept 24, and was widely seen as a vital pre-duel between Merkel's CDU and ex-President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz's SPD.

The result could greatly boost the morale of CDU in the national election, since it has scored success in three state elections this year, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia.

In the past several months, some opinion polls have constantly showed Schulz will have the edge over his major competitor Merkel in the coming federal election. Some local media even dubbed it as "Shulz effect," and speculated Schulz might substitute Merkel since she lost momentum due to the migrant crisis.

But the recent setbacks dimmed the halo of Schulz since he failed to transform his popularity into votes.

SPD leader Schulz admitted a "crashing defeat" for his party, since his party lost 8.2 percent of the ballots compared to the 2012 election.

German local media also called the result as "political earthquake."

North Rhine-Westphalia has been governed by a center-left coalition of the SPD and the Greens since 2010, with the Social Democrat Hannelore Kraft serving as state premier.

Kraft retreated from all her functions in SPD after the election. She said it's sad the party lost so many districts and she "takes personal responsibility for this defeat."

North Rhine-Westphalia is the most populous among the German states with nearly 18 million residents accounting for 20 percent of Germany's population.