

[/ Home](#) / [World News](#)

Germany was built for stability, so what happens when it disappears?

The AfD's latest gains are only part of the story as Germany's postwar party system fractures and stable government becomes harder to sustain

Published 21 Sep, 2026 16:36



By **Fyodor Lukyanov**, the editor-in-chief of *Russia in Global Affairs*, chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, and research director of the Valdai International Discussion Club.

[Russia in
Global Affairs](#)
[RGA on
Telegram](#)



The latest state elections in Germany have confirmed a trend that is becoming increasingly difficult to dismiss. The issue is no longer the occasional success of one party or failure of another, but the gradual dismantling of a political system that for decades appeared almost permanent.

The postwar German model

Top stories



Kremlin reacts to Ukraine's attack on Russian elections

WATCH Ukrainian press gang snatch TV crew member outside Kiev studio

Trump signs off on Russia sanctions 'from hell': Who could get hit? [EXPLAINER](#)

Merz's party hits new low in regional election 'disaster'

Polish diplomatic security chief falls from third floor window

Subscribe to RT newsletter to get news highlights of the day right in your mailbox

© Sean Gallup/Getty Images

rested on competition between two “*people’s parties*,” the

Christian Democrats and Social Democrats and this conservative-social democratic axis provided stability after the upheavals of the first half of the 20th century, allowing governments to alternate while remaining within broadly accepted political boundaries.

Germany adhered to this model particularly closely, so the political landscape expanded significantly only twice, first with the rise of the Greens in the 1980s, which brought the rebellious generation of 1968 into the establishment, and then after reunification with the emergence of the Left from the former East German political tradition, but that orderly system is now breaking down.

The results in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Berlin, following Saxony-Anhalt two weeks earlier, leap off the page, as the AfD won 38.2% in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, while the CDU fell below the 5% threshold for the first time in a German state election. In Berlin, meanwhile, the Left finished first, with the CDU second and the SPD falling to fifth place.

For the leaderships of the CDU and SPD, it’s tempting to reduce the problem to the rise of the AfD and concentrate on how it should be contained, but the deeper problem is the fragmentation of the entire electoral landscape and the disappearance of the political manageability that Germany once took for granted.

Whether the AfD itself is capable of governing effectively remains another question, given the party has never governed a German state, while the established parties continue to reject coalitions with it.

Germany is therefore moving towards something resembling the politics of smaller European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, or Austria, with fragmented parliaments and increasingly complicated multiparty coalitions.



Read more: Crucial regional votes in Germany: What’s at stake for Merz?

E-mail

☐ We offer you the possibility to receive RT’s news highlights every Monday, Wednesday and Friday by email.

Subscribe

RT Features



From Phoenicians to Franco: Why are these African cities Spanish at all? FEATURE

There's nothing inherently unworkable about such a system and plenty of European countries function this way, but Germany is different. Its political culture has traditionally valued predictability and institutional continuity, but if fragmentation now spreads inside the CDU and SPD themselves, the consequences will extend beyond election arithmetic.

Germany isn't particularly comfortable with political upheaval and when Germany becomes politically nervous, its neighbors have historically had reason to pay attention.

[ANALYSIS](#)

You can share this story on social media:

Follow RT on



Please check our [commenting policy](#). If you have questions or suggestions feel free to send them to feedback@rttv.ru.

[SHOW COMMENTS](#)

[/ Home](#) / [World News](#)

Paris protesters clash with police over 'license to kill' bill (VIDEO)

Critics say the proposed law would make it harder to hold officers accountable for shootings



The West calls it Russia's Starlink. That misses the point FEATURE



Mearsheimer: There's no diplomatic way out of the Ukraine war FEATURE

Podcasts

[All podcasts](#)



0:00

Europe's sleepwalking leaders, mercurial Trump, pragmatic US, UN Reform — with Dmitry Polyanskiy

44:54



Prof. Steve Hanke warns to stay away from US bond market as 'Trump

Published 21 Sep, 2026 17:26

Police and protesters clashed in Paris over the weekend as thousands demonstrated against a proposed law that critics claim would give law enforcement officers a *“license to kill.”*

Video from the French capital showed police firing tear gas and chasing demonstrators as the streets filled with smoke, with protesters attempting to kick smoking canisters back toward officers.



Protest in Paris against bill granting police presumption of legitimate self defense on September 20, 2026. © Getty Images / Jerome Gilles/NurPhoto

Protesters carried signs reading *“The people are not a target,”* *“Justice for victims of police violence,”* and *“No to the firearms permit.”*

The demonstrations erupted over a new bill that would alter the legal procedures for when a police officer shoots someone. Under the proposed legislation, the authorities would start from the assumption that the officer used their weapon legally. That assumption could still be challenged if evidence showed otherwise.

is trapped in an inflation crisis'

0:00

27:18

