**2 Turkeys and the opposition at crossroads**

The result of the second round in the presidential elections was closer than most expected. Recep Tayyip Erdogan won with 52% against his challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu who reached 48%. With this result, the polarization and division of the country was once again manifested. However, president Erdogan can govern at least four years with an absolute majority in parliament, which his alliance reached in the parliamentary elections on 14 May.

Thus, the signs point to continuity. This also applies to the authoritarian tendencies that have characterized Turkey since at least 2016. For many, especially young people who are close to the opposition, 4 more years might be too long. Many will probably try to get a job or university studies abroad. After the first round of elections on 14 May, the word emigration came up a lot in conversations with opposition voters.

The participation dropped a little bit from 89% to 85%. While pollsters before the election thought that the higher the participation, the better the chances for the opposition, this lower turnout didn’t seem to harm the opposition. While the result in Turkey was even closer, the votes from abroad, especially those from Western Europe, made Erdogan win with this margin. Overall, especially the second round is a respectable result for the opposition, who is excluded from the mainstream media, has much fewer resources and was faced with accusations of collaborating with terrorists by also using for the first time deep-fake videos.

With these results there are few open questions. One is who will be the ministers in the 3rd Erdogan presidency. 16 of his former ministers became MPs on 14 May. If they become ministers again, the AKP will lose these seats in parliament. Therefore, it is expected that only a few of them will become ministers again. Therefore, there will be many new ministers. The selection of these new faces could show in which direction the new government is heading and whether also more liberal politicians will become minister.

However, to Erdogan's alliance also belong small extreme Islamist and ultranationalist parties. This could mean an even more conservative course on social issues and a more religious approach e.g. concerning the banking sector.

However, the outcome of the elections will bring about major changes for the opposition and party landscape. The currently dominant, more liberal current within the biggest opposition party, the CHP, will lose weight. Kurds will lose political space. And overall, the political system will move from far right to even further right.

After 21 years of Erdoğan, hopes were high within the Turkish opposition that this time they could really win the elections. The disillusionment will now be correspondingly great. Some of the party leaders might face harsh criticism for their election strategy, among them also the CHP chairman Kilicdaroglu, but also the party leaders of the small conservative-religious parties Saadet, Deva and Gelecek will have to justify themselves, because they were precisely the ones who were supposed to draw votes from the AKP, which did not work.

The list of losers on the opposition front is long and also includes the pro-Kurdish HDP. The party lost in comparison to 2018 in votes and the strategy to cooperate with leftist microparties didn’t pay out.

The big winners of the election, on the other hand, are ultra-nationalist micro parties, which were able to make gains and pander to both the government and the opposition before the second round, extracting illusory concessions from both on the issue of deportating millions of Syrians. Third-place presidential candidate Sinan Oğan, with a surprise 5 percent vote win, is being touted as the successor to ailing MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli.

Foreign policy will not change much. Turkey will continue to try to dance on several high tides and play an alternating policy between the EU and Russia, the West and the Middle East. However, it will tend to increase its distance from the West and its institutions. Not everyone will regret that. In the EU, many will be happy about Erdogan's election. Brussels has been knowing Erdogan and know that they can negotiate with him. Agreement can be reached on migration and energy policies, there are no imponderables, and there is no need to concern oneself with the accession process. Greece could benefit from this situation, which could make it more important for the U.S. and the West in the eastern Mediterranean.

Continuity in domestic and foreign policy with a trend towards more authoritarianism at home and Eastward looking abroad. For the opposition, the cards are being reshuffled. It looks like the opposition will return to a more traditional path and end more liberal experiments. The youth, who want to live in a democratic, European country, have mainly two options. Keep quiet or emigrate. Most of them will choose one of these options.