

LOCAL ELECTIONS 2025

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

ANALYSIS

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

The big winner of the local elections was the Social Democratic Party (PSD), which not only won the country's most populous cities, but also overtook the Socialist Party (PS) in number of municipalities and will recoup leadership of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, which they haven't held in 12 years, and the National Association of Parishes.

Despite losing its leadership in local government, PS won 128 municipal councils, in a result that shows signs of recovery after its defeat in the May general election. Among the most symbolic gains are the historic victories in Bragança and Viseu, traditionally social-democratic strongholds, and in Coimbra and Faro, reinforcing the perception of the Socialist party's recovery.

The Chega party won, for the first time, three municipal councils, a milestone in its history, but far from the desired result. The final result confirms the maintenance of the bipartisan system between PSD and PS in regards to local power.

PSD, led by Luís Montenegro, won 136 municipalities, notably in Lisbon, Porto, Sintra, Vila Nova de Gaia and Cascais. This victory reinforces the ruling party as the main national and local political force.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

01 LISBOA, PORTO, SINTRA, GAIA AND CASCAIS: PSD WINS IN THE MOST POPULOUS CITIES

Under the leadership of Luís Montenegro, PSD won 136 municipalities, notably in the five most populous municipalities – Lisbon, Porto, Sintra, Vila Nova de Gaia and Cascais – of which they only previously held Lisbon and Cascais.

This result consolidates the ruling party as the leading national and local political force and reinforces its position as the future leader of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities and the National Association of Parishes.

02 PS LOSES ITS LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL POWER

Of the 308 municipal councils, 128 were won by the Socialist Party, which lost its historical position as the main force in local government to PSD.

“PS is back” was the phrase repeated by the Socialist Party’s secretary-general, José Luís Carneiro, who sees this result as a sign of the party’s political recovery after its historic defeat in last May’s general election.

03 CHEGA WINS ITS FIRST COUNCILS

The Chega party wins municipal councils for the first time – Albufeira, Entroncamento and São Vicente (Autonomous Region of Madeira). Even so, the bipartisanship between PSD and the Socialist Party (PS) gains new momentum and Chega does not reach the local stature it aspired to, having come behind PCP and CDS.

04 STRONGHOLDS SHIFT ALLEGIANCE

Setúbal, Viseu and Guimarães are examples of historic changes in local government power. In Setúbal, CDU lost the council after 20 years in power, despite the winning candidate being a former PCP activist. In Guimarães, PS ceded power to PSD after 36 years of socialist leadership, while in Viseu, the socialists won, for the first time, a municipality dominated by the right and almost always governed by PSD.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

CCDRs

The Regional Coordination and Development Commissions (CCDR) are special public institutions, integrated into the indirect administration of the State, with administrative and financial autonomy and their own assets. It is their mission to define and implement regional development strategies; to integrate and articulate public policies for regional development in the areas of the environment, cities, economy, culture, education, health, spatial planning, nature conservation, agriculture and fishing, as well as ensuring the planning and management of European funds.

After the local elections on October 12th, **the new mayors will have to elect the presidents and vice-presidents of the CCDRs**, who since 2020 are no longer appointed by the Government. These elections must take place within 90 days of the local elections and will be called by the Minister for the Economy and Territorial Cohesion, Manuel Castro Almeida, at least 30 days in advance. It is therefore expected that by **mid-January**, the CCDRs will have **new governing boards**, whose terms will last four years and are limited to three consecutive ones.

The president of each CCDR (North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo and Algarve) is elected by an electoral college that includes mayors and members of council and municipal assemblies. The vote is individual and secret. One of the main new changes is the way in which vice-presidents are chosen: while the Government no longer appoints them directly, one of the vice-presidents is now appointed on the proposal of the Minister of Agriculture and Fishing, due to the integration of the regional directorates of agriculture into the CCDRs. The remaining vice-presidents may be elected by the mayors and members of the regional council who do not represent local authorities or municipal associations.

CIMs

Inter-municipal communities (CIMs) are associations of municipalities that promote the economic, social and environmental development of territories, coordinating investments and regional programmes. They ensure cooperation between municipalities and the State in areas such as infrastructure, education, mobility and the environment, exercising their own, delegated or transferred powers.

CIMs are not elected by direct vote of the citizens. They are bodies for cooperation between municipalities, **whose composition results from local elections**, through the representation of mayors and other municipal elected officials.

The CIMs are comprised of: the Intermunicipal Assembly, composed of members appointed by the municipal assemblies; the Intermunicipal Council, which brings together the mayors and elects the president of the CIM from its members; and the Intermunicipal Executive Secretariat, appointed by the Intermunicipal Council.

METROPOLITAN AREAS

Metropolitan Areas follow a model similar to that of CIMs, but apply to territories with higher population density and urban interdependence – currently Lisbon and Porto. They are also not elected by direct vote of the citizens: they result from the association of contiguous municipalities, and **their composition derives from local elections**, through the representation of mayors and members appointed by municipal assemblies.

The Metropolitan Areas are comprised of: the Metropolitan Assembly, composed of representatives from municipal assemblies; the Metropolitan Council, made up of mayors who elect the president of the metropolitan area from among themselves; and the Metropolitan Executive Secretariat, appointed by the Metropolitan Council.

MAIN FIGURES OF ELECTION NIGHT

LISBON

Carlos Moedas, the incumbent and leader of the 'Por Ti Lisboa' (For You Lisbon) coalition (PSD, CDS-PP and IL), was re-elected mayor of Lisbon, with over 30 thousand votes more than four years ago, defeating the socialist candidate, Alexandra Leitão.

For his second term, Moedas has set as his priorities the continuation of the promotion of affordable housing - through rent control projects and the rehabilitation of municipal neighbourhoods - and the improvement of urban cleaning and street hygiene, one of the main criticisms levelled at him during his first term. Improving the transportation network and increasing local policing are other priorities for Carlos Moedas.

Despite his victory - 8 councillors out of 17 - the coalition led by Moedas is one councillor away from an absolute majority, against 6 from the coalition led by Alexandra Leitão councillors, two for Chega and one for CDU.

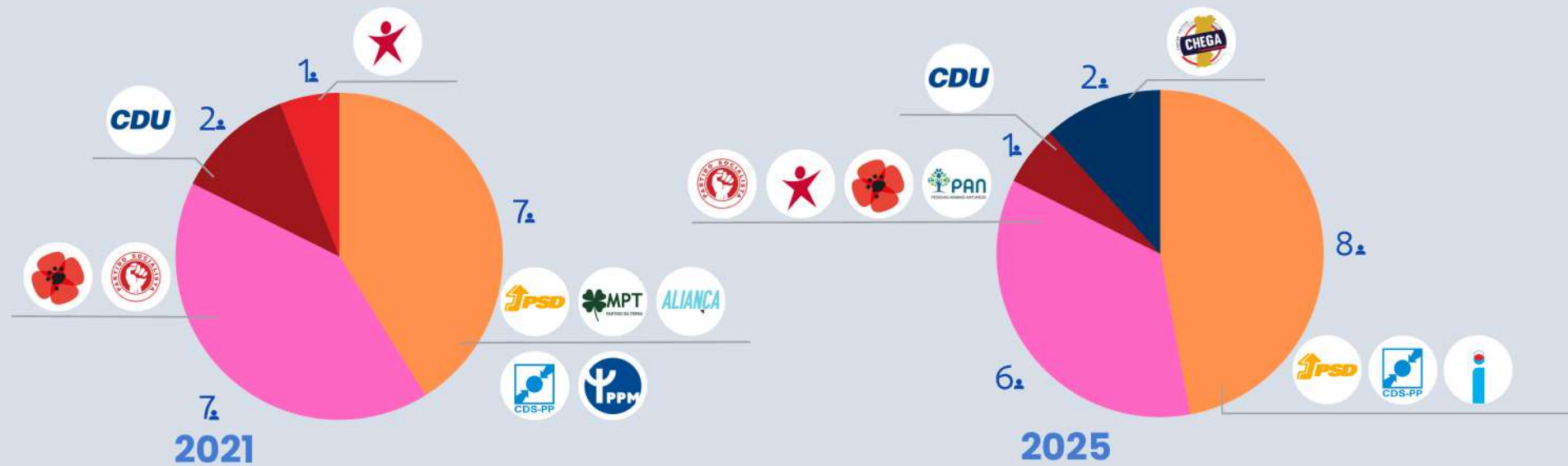


PORTO

After three terms led by independent Rui Moreira, Porto's City Council will now be led by **Pedro Duarte**, head of the PSD, CDS-PP and IL coalition 'O Porto Somos Nós' (Porto is Us). The former Minister for Parliamentary Affairs defeated the socialist Manuel Pizarro, who had already ran in 2013 and 2017.

In his debut as leader of the country's second largest municipality, Pedro Duarte has the goal to reduce the municipal IRS (Individual Income Tax) from 3% to 1.5%. Among the new executive's main priorities will be strengthening public safety, free public transport for all Porto residents, creating 700 new vacancies in nurseries and expanding the 'Regressar' (Come Back) programme in Porto, with tax incentives and support for entrepreneurship by young people and families returning to the city.

Without an absolute majority, the new executive will have six councillors from the coalition led by PSD, as many as PS, and one from Chega.



MAIN FIGURES OF ELECTION NIGHT



SINTRA

The second most populous municipality in the country swings to the right – after three consecutive terms by the independent Basílio Horta, supported by PS, **Marco Almeida** manages, on his third attempt, to win the presidency of the local authority for PSD, with the support of the Liberal Initiative (IL) and PAN in the “Sempre com os Sintrenses” (Always with the people of Sintra) coalition.

Marco Almeida, who was deputy mayor of Sintra between 2001 and 2013 and councillor from 2013 to 2021, centred his campaign on promising answers to the pressure on housing, education and health, which he considers to be caused by the increase in the municipality's population, particularly immigrants.

The Sintra executive will be made up of four councillors from the coalition led by PSD, the same as the coalition coordinated by PS, and three from Chega.



GAIA



Governed by Eduardo Vítor Rodrigues, of the Socialist Party, since 2013 – who left office in June this year after the Constitutional Court upheld his sentencing to loss of mandate – the Vila Nova de Gaia City Council has swung back to the right, moving from a socialist majority to a right-leaning majority led by **Luís Filipe Menezes**.

Menezes had already been President of the third largest municipality in the country, elected and re-elected in 2001, 2005 and 2009, always with an absolute majority.

With extensive political experience, Menezes returns as head of the “Gaia Sempre na Frente” coalition with priorities centred on defining a new generation of educational policies, creating an economic development plan focused on smart reindustrialisation and increasing the housing supply.

The executive will be made up of five councillors from the coalition led by PSD, as many as PS, plus one from Chega, which may allow for agreements on the right.



MAIN FIGURES OF ELECTION NIGHT

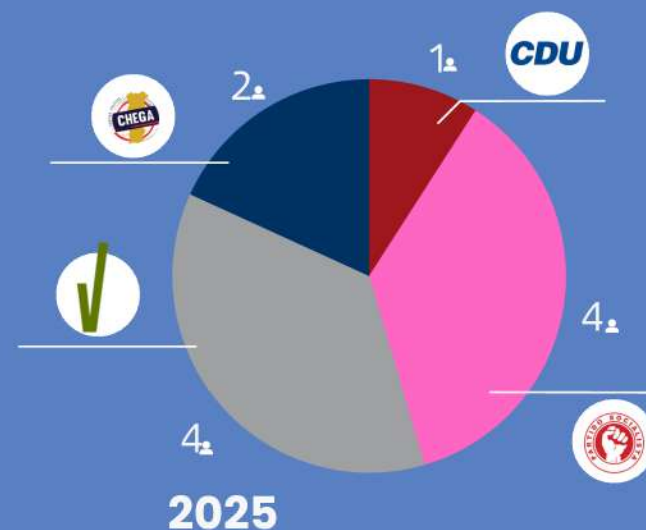
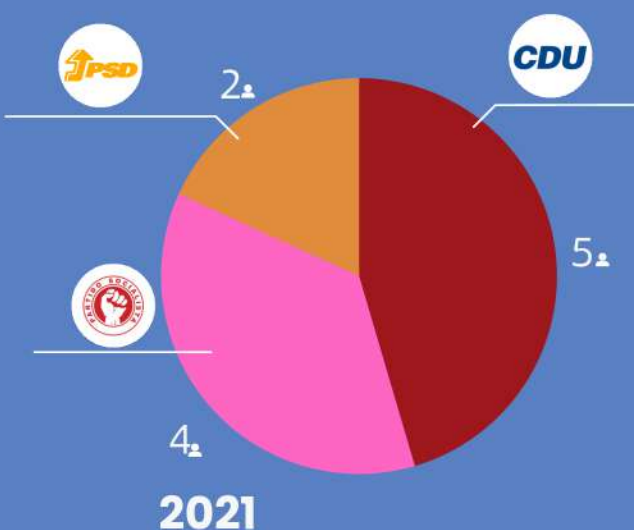
SETÚBAL



Governed by CDU for 20 years, currently by André Valente Martins, Setúbal sees the return of **Maria das Dores Meira**, this time as an independent candidate for Setúbal de Volta, albeit with the support of PSD.

A former PCP activist, Meira won the local elections for Setúbal's City Council on the CDU ticket in 2009, 2013 and 2017. In 2021, she reached the limit of terms in Setúbal and ran for mayor of Almada, having been defeated.

Meira's priorities for her candidacy include job creation, attracting investment, housing, and better quality health services. The new executive includes four councillors from the independent candidacy, the same as PS, two from Chega, and one from CDU. Given the Mayor's track record, it may be easy to find points of convergence on the left.



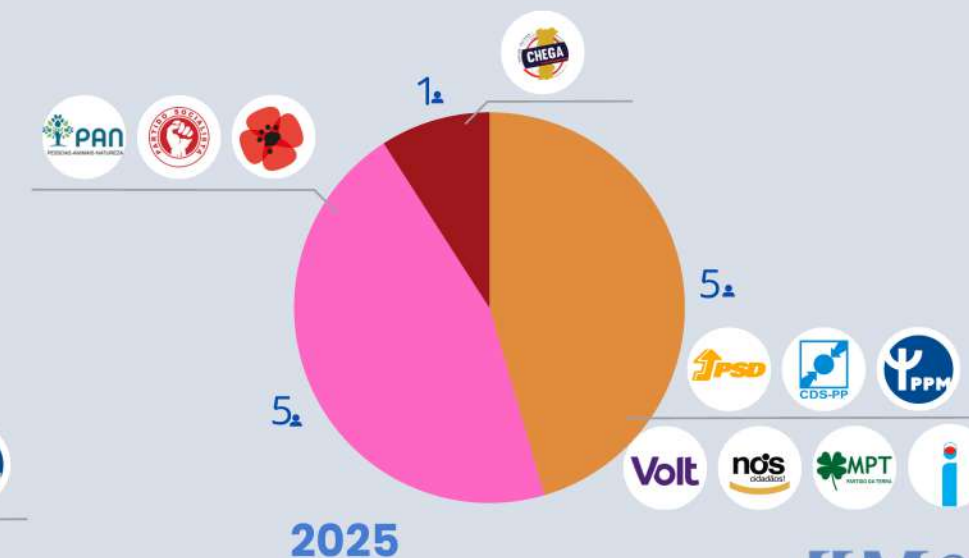
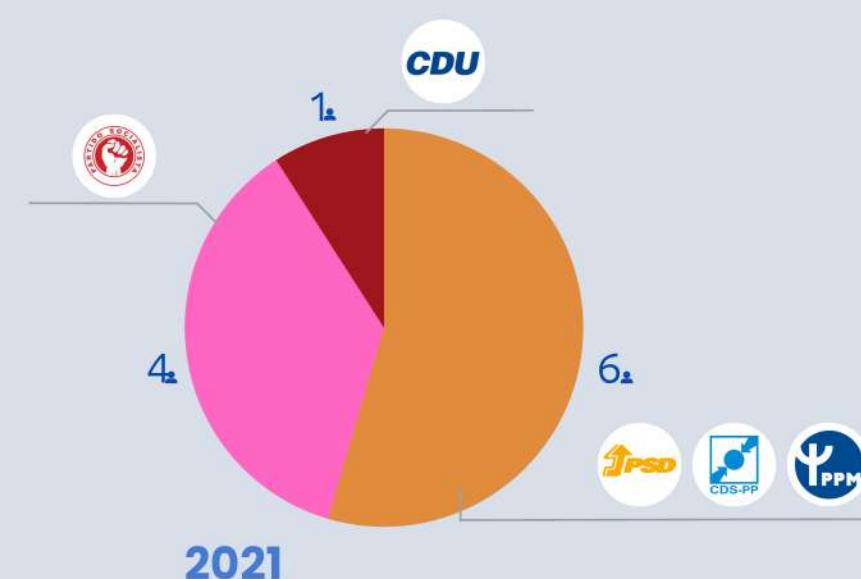
COIMBRA



Governed by the right under the presidency of José Manuel Silva, Coimbra's City Council now returns to the Socialist Party, with **Ana Abrunhosa** at the head of the "Avançar Coimbra" (Move Coimbra Forward) coalition - which includes PS, Livre and PAN.

With extensive experience in the region, as a result of her positions as President of CCDR Centre and Minister for Territorial Cohesion, Ana Abrunhosa takes up her new role as leader of the municipality with priorities focused on increasing housing supply and improving mobility. Attracting investment and creating skilled jobs are also commitments made by the coalition.

Ana Abrunhosa's executive will be made up of five councillors from the coalition led by PS, five from PSD, and one from Chega. With a relative majority, Abrunhosa is expected to seek consensus in the centre, working with the councillors elected through the coalition led by José Manuel Silva.



MAIN FIGURES OF ELECTION NIGHT



BRAGANÇA

Governed by PSD since 1997, Bragança's City Council has changed its political complexion and is now chaired by **Isabel Ferreira** of PS, who succeeds Paulo Xavier.

With governing experience as Secretary of State for the Interior (XXII Government) and Secretary of State for Regional Development (XXIII Government), Isabel Ferreira defines her priorities as attracting investment and promoting innovative projects, with the goal of attracting and retaining young people in the county.

Among the highlighted initiatives is the creation of a logistics platform based at the aerodrome, with links to research centres and the network of social, economic and business institutions.

The executive from Bragança will be made up of four councillors from PS and three from PSD.



UISEU

Considered the oldest social-democratic stronghold in the country, Viseu's City Council has been won by the Socialist Party for the first time.

Fernando Ruas, who began his first term in 1989, led the local municipality for 28 years. The new Mayor, **João Azevedo**, has local government experience, obtained over ten years at the helm of the Mangualde City Council, also in the district of Viseu. He had already been a candidate in 2021, the year in which he achieved the Socialist Party's best ever result in Viseu.

For his new term, João Azevedo's priorities are to attract investment, create skilled jobs and boost the economy, seeking to establish Viseu as a more dynamic and competitive region.

The new Viseu executive will be made up of four PS councillors, as many as PSD and one from Chega, meaning a demanding governance is to be expected.



MAIN FIGURES OF ELECTION NIGHT

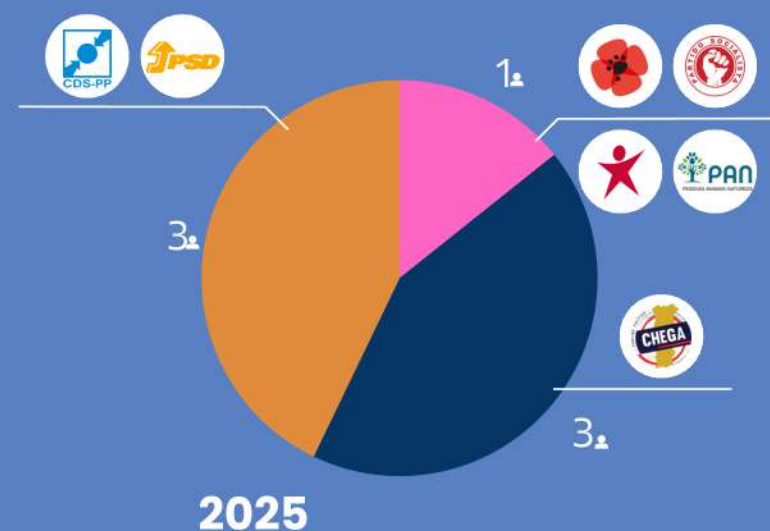
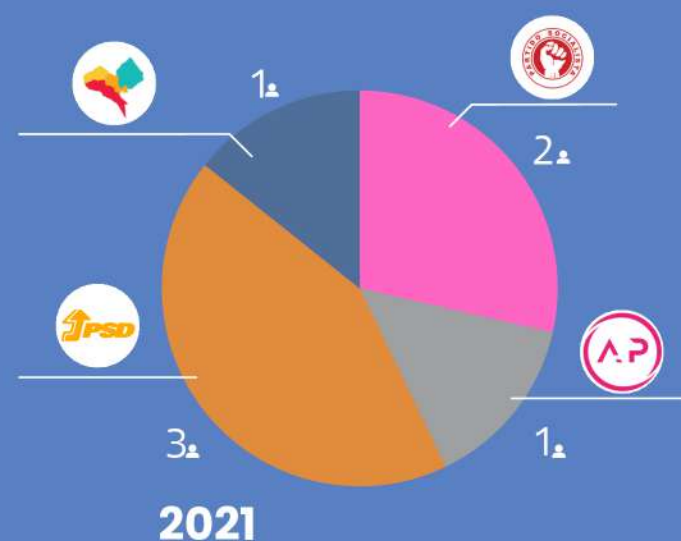
ALBUFEIRA



In the orange stronghold of Albufeira, where the Social Democrats have governed since 2002, it was a former Social Democrat, **Rui Cristina**, who managed to win the City Council, but this time for Chega. It is one of three councils that Chega managed to win in these past general elections, garnering 40.51% of the votes compared to 31.3% for the current mayor José Carlos Rolo of PSD/CDS-PP.

Making the council safer and restoring Albufeira's good name and reputation as a tourist destination were the priorities taken on by Rui Cristina in his candidacy. Also regarding housing, Rui Cristina promised affordable housing that would allow young people to build their future in the council.

The new executive will now have three councillors from Chega, the same number as the coalition led by PSD, and one councillor from PS.



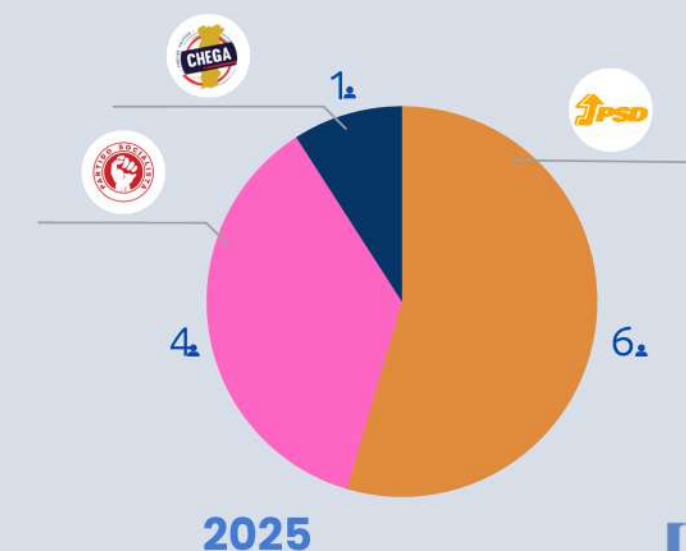
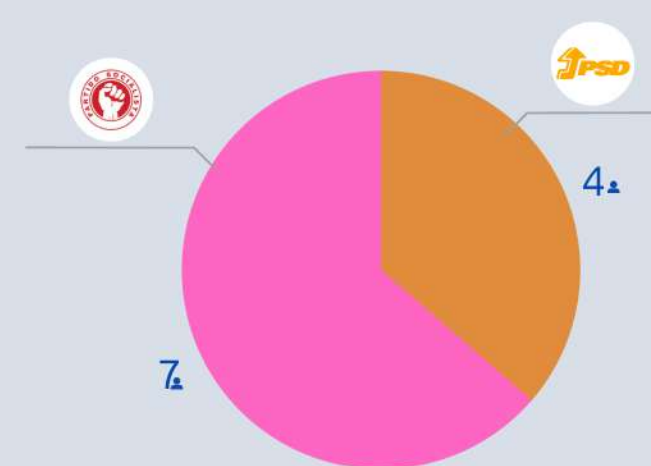
GUIMARÃES



Guimarães is also witnessing a historic change - the municipality, governed for 36 years by the Socialists, is now falling into the hands of PSD, with **Ricardo Araújo** defeating Ricardo Costa, Socialist MP and president of the party's municipal council.

A member of the Assembly of the Republic, with extensive experience at the local level, Ricardo Araújo committed himself in this candidacy to finding an urgent solution to mobility and housing problems. The issue of the municipality's loss of appeal is also one of the priorities for Ricardo Araújo, who wants to promote a council of innovation, with a new business park and a strategy to attract investment.

PSD, which until now had only four councillors in the Guimarães executive, now holds the majority, with six councillors. PS's historic defeat is reflected in their number of councillors, which has fallen from seven to four, with Chega rounding out the executive by electing its first councillor.



MAIN FIGURES OF ELECTION NIGHT

FARO



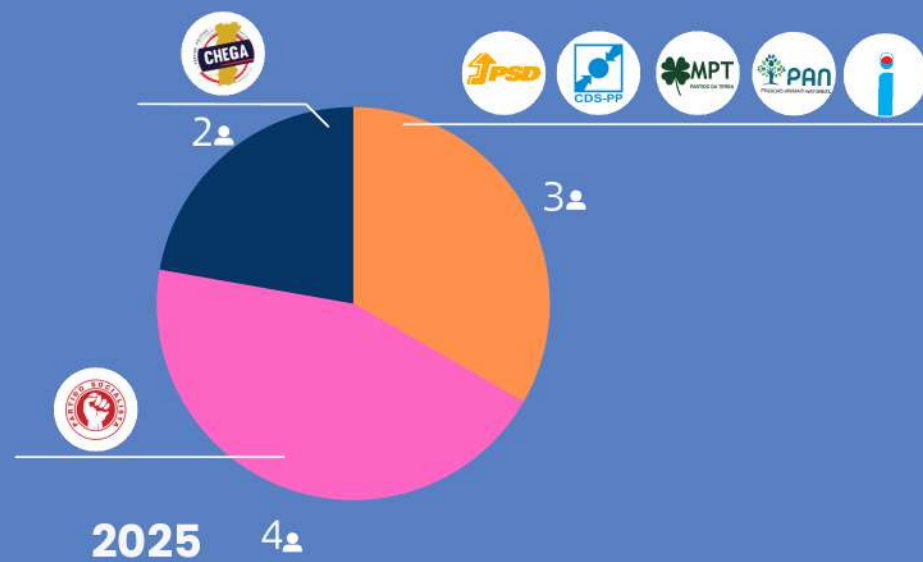
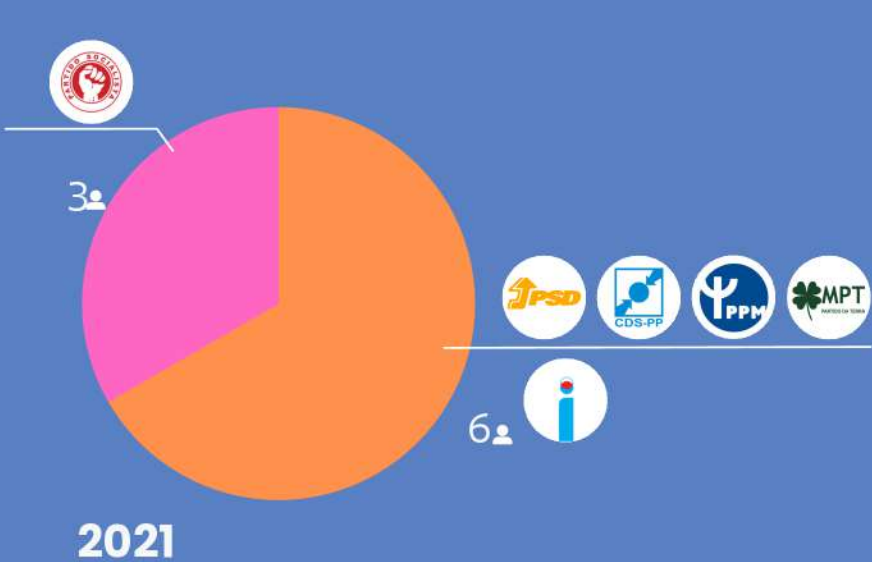
Governed by PSD since 2009, the Faro City Council returns, after 16 years, to Socialist hands, with **António Pina** at the helm.

The Socialist candidate, who in August left the Olhão City Council after reaching the limit of three consecutive terms as Mayor, defeated Cristóvão Norte, the PSD candidate and party leader in the Algarve.

Even so, the Socialist Party (PS) did not secure an absolute majority, and there is now a right-wing majority (three council seats for PSD and two for Chega), which could complicate the governance of the new executive.

During the campaign, António Pina stated his goal of making Faro the largest urban center in the region, namely by advancing with the creation of a major business hub to attract more companies and foster an economy more connected to research and less dependent on tourism.

The new executive will include four councillors from PS, three from the PSD-led coalition, and two from Chega.



REACTIONS

PSD

"It is with great satisfaction that, as president of PSD, I note that we are once again the largest Portuguese party in local government, the largest Portuguese party in regional government, and the largest Portuguese party in the National Assembly".

Luís Montenegro
President of the Social Democratic Party



PS

"It is with joy that we affirm that we have received a strong vote of confidence from the urban electorate, having succeeded in winning that electorate and five district capitals (...), a clear sign that we have reached a more demanding segment of voters (...). The Portuguese have once again placed their trust in the Socialist Party."

José Luís Carneiro
Secretary General of the Socialist Party



CHEGA

"We achieved a great result in terms of votes, and that is what I want to thank. (...) This was a good night for Chega, which has now become a local government party, but it was not the victory we had hoped for. Chega did not achieve all of its goals."

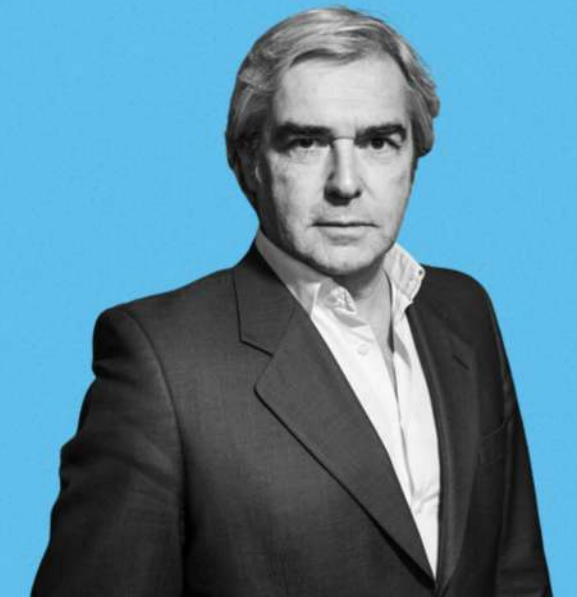
André Ventura
President of Chega Party



CDS-PP

"What defines political parties, as with people, is not the moments of difficulty, but the moments of overcoming them. And the CDS overcomes every difficult moment. (...) A party like this is absolutely essential to democracy in Portugal (...). It stands on its own in independent lists, just as it does in coalition."

Nuno Melo
President of the CDS-PP



REACTIONS

CDU

"A result which, although generally negative, shows elements of resilience. (...) It is also important to note the positive trend in the city of Lisbon, with the election of João Ferreira."

*Paulo Raimundo
Secretary-General of the Communist Party*



IL *iniciativa*

"It is an extraordinary result, which clearly shows that IL is a party that has already achieved remarkable territorial reach for one with such a short existence."

*Mariana Leitão
President of the Liberal Initiative*



LIVRE

"[The results] are moderately positive. (...) Livre aimed to triple or even quintuple the number of its elected representatives and is on track to achieve the first of those goals, at the lower end of what we had hoped for."

*Rui Tavares
Livre Spokesperson*



BE

"We can conclude that the Left Bloc's result was modest — that must be acknowledged. However, in several places, we want to focus on the outcomes of the alliances we were able to build."

*Mariana Mortágua
Coordinator of the Left Bloc*





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