

# *German Chancellor Angela Merkel Defends Refugee Policy Despite Electoral Loss*

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Berlin, September 7 (RHC)-- German Chancellor Angela Merkel has once again defended her stance on allowing asylum seekers into Germany despite her party's loss at local elections apparently over the government's refugee policy.

During a speech in the lower house of the German parliament in Berlin, Merkel said: "I consider the fundamental decisions as right, but there is much to be done to win back trust and the topic of integration will play a huge role."

The remarks came just three days after a stunning defeat suffered by her party, the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), by an anti-refugee party in regional elections. On Sunday, Merkel's CDU party fell to third place after the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in her home state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. The center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) gained the first place in the contest, according to exit polls.

Merkel said her government has expedited integration measures for those refugees who are granted asylum, including by raising school funding to help their education and by trying to find solutions for local

problems through working with cities and states.

Merkel has been under fire at home since last year, when she opened the country's borders to the massive influx of asylum seekers, mostly fleeing violence in Middle Eastern and African states.

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