

Spain's Socialists Pave Way for Rajoy Government, Prevent New Election



Madrid, October 25 (RHC)-- Spain's Socialist Party brought an end to a months-long deadlock with a vote in favor of allowing conservative acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to be re-elected to serve another term in office and saving the country from going to the polls for the third time in less than a year.

The leadership of the Socialist Party, known as the PSOE, voted 139 to 96 in favor of abstaining in the confidence vote Rajoy faces next week, paving the way for the Popular Party leader to secure the country's top office after 10 months of political limbo.

The decision marks a shift for the PSOE, which previously refused to let Rajoy lock in another term as prime minister, rejecting an agreement with the PP and the newly-formed center-right party Ciudadanos. Without the PSOE against Rajoy, however, other opposition parties, including the young group Unidos Podemos, don't have enough votes to block Rajoy.

Pablo Iglesias, leader of Unidos Podemos, wrote on his Twitter account following the announcement that the decision marked a shift in the long-standing tradition in Spain of trading power between the two main parties — the PSOE and PPP. "A Grand Coalition is born," he wrote, "that we will have to confront as the

alternative.”

The PSOE’s position on Rajoy marks the first time in history the party has facilitated the formation of a conservative government since the return to democracy in Spain in 1977. The issue has sparked heated political debates.

Spain has been in political limbo since elections last December 20 when all four main contending parties fell short of secure enough seats for an outright win to govern alone. Rajoy has since headed a caretaker government as rounds of negotiations failed to secure a coalition to govern, forcing new elections on June 26, resulting once again in a hung parliament.

The PSOE has opted to abstain in the confidence vote, paving the way for Rajoy to form a minority government. The socialists fear new elections would drop their support from second to third place after the PP.

Supporters of the PSOE displeased with the move protested outside the party’s headquarters in Madrid Saturday demanding a democratic voice in the decision and rejecting a PP government.

The elections and political uncertainty have proven that Unidos Podemos and Ciudadanos managed to disrupt Spain’s traditional two-party system. The PSOE and PP have for years gone back and forth as the country’s ruling party, but victories for Unidos Podemos and Ciudadanos have been interpreted as a popular bid for change in the country.

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