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Madrid region gets its first government propped up by the far right

Wednesday 2 October 2019, by [MATEO Juan José](#), [URRA Susana](#) (Date first published: 14 August 2019).

Conservative candidate Isabel Díaz Ayuso was confirmed as the new leader following a tense debate at the regional assembly

Isabel Díaz Ayuso became the new regional premier of Madrid on Wednesday after facing down a barrage of criticism from leftist political leaders at the two-day debate that preceded the vote.

Her administration will represent several historical firsts: it will be the first time that the region is run by a coalition government – Ayuso’s own conservative Popular Party (PP) and the center-right Ciudadanos – and it will be the first time that the far right, represented by Vox, props up a Madrid regional executive. A similar governing arrangement is in place in the southern region of Andalusia.

“It is a challenge, an honor and a privilege to preside the first coalition government,” said Ayuso. “Department heads from one party will have to carry out measures from the other party, and vice-versa. It will be a great exercise in responsibility, common sense and respect for citizens.”

The governing agreement has been reached two and a half months after regional elections were held on May 26, reflecting the increased complexity of Spanish politics following the emergence of new parties such as Vox, Ciudadanos and the leftist Podemos.

On Wednesday, Ayuso told lawmakers at the Madrid assembly that she will honor her party’s program agreements with Ciudadanos and Vox “in their entirety.” The conservative politician needed these parties’ votes to be confirmed as the new leader of the Madrid region.

This public statement had been a request of Vox’s, since no signed document exists following Ciudadanos’ refusal to engage with the far-right party directly.

Leaders of leftist parties on Wednesday questioned many of Ayuso’s plans for the coming term, and reminded her of the PP’s history of corruption cases.

“Lowering taxes at the expense of increasing debt, like [your party] has been doing, without improving public services, was a mistake and will continue to be so,” said Ángel Gabilondo of the Socialist Party (PSOE).

Isabel Serra of the far-left Unidas Podemos struck a more personal note, asking Ayuso if she thinks it will be long before she is prosecuted for her alleged role in a case involving a loan for her father that went unpaid.

Vox’s Rocío Monasterio, meanwhile, told the PP and Ciudadanos that they are here to “clean the cesspool” and made renewed calls for streamlining government (which will in fact grow from nine to 13 departments). “We are aware of our political strength in this assembly. Only through alliances

with parties that defend the same concept of freedom as ourselves can we prevent the left from entering the institutions.”

“Your fear is not losing freedom, your fear is losing power,” said Gabilondo, alluding to the fact that the PP has governed the region uninterruptedly since 1995. On May 26, the Socialists earned more seats, 37 to the PP’s 30, but support from Ciudadanos and Vox will ensure that the conservatives remain at the helm.

The measures that Ayuso will incorporate at Vox’s request include forcing public schools to inform parents about the subject matter of workshops and expert talks before the beginning of each academic year; changing the way unaccompanied underage migrants are identified, working to increase the birth rate through a new Family department, and “fighting sexism but not fighting men.”

English version by [Susana Urra](#)

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