

Denmark Prime Minister Concedes Election Defeat



Copenhagen, June 19 (RHC)-- Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt has conceded defeat in the small Nordic country's parliamentary elections, and put an end to her four years as head of a left-leaning government.

Thorning-Schmidt told party members she will step down as premier and leader of the Social Democratic Party, which she has led since 2005, on Friday.

"We were beaten on the finish line," Denmark's first female leader said, adding, "I know that Lars Lokke [Rasmussen] loves Denmark and he should be happy that he takes over a Denmark that is in great shape."

The center-right opposition led by the former prime minister, Lars Lokke Rasmussen, emerged victorious in Denmark's Thursday elections. The anti-immigration party, which has pledged to limit the European Union's influence over Denmark, could receive the 90 seats needed to secure a majority in the 179-seat legislature.

Thorning-Schmidt's coalition got 89 seats in total, one short of a majority.

"Four years ago we handed over the keys to the prime minister's office. I then said it was only a loan," Rasmussen told supporters in Copenhagen.

"There is a majority that believes that Denmark needs a new government and gives us a possibility to get the keys back," he stated.

Kristian Thulesen Dahl, the leader of the Danish People's Party that managed to secure 37 seats and emerge as the second-largest in the incoming parliament, said the result was "fantastic" and thanked the party's supporters for running a great campaign.

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