
Spain: Will Popular Party and Ciudadanos Join Forces?

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A meeting between the leaders of the Popular Party and Ciudadanos in Spain ended early Wednesday on whether the two parties will join forces toward the difficult task of forming a coalition government.

If the two parties were to decide on unifying, they still would not have enough seats to form a government.

Spain has been without a functioning government for the past nine months, after facing two elections that left no party in a majority position.

During the meeting, Albert Rivera, leader of the right-wing Ciudadanos party said that he will give acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and his Popular Party time to consider their options. The Popular Party is expected to meet next Wednesday to hold a vote on Ciudadanos' demands in exchange for forming a coalition.

"Rajoy wants to vote on its executive conditions in the coming days, we will respect and wait for an answer," said Rivera in a press conference following the meeting.

Rajoy repeatedly stressed that Spain urgently needed a working government and did not need to go to a third election. he still has hopes of forming a larger coalition with Ciudadanos and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party. But the PSOE does not supported such a plan.

The PP came in first in June elections, but fell short of a majority and has been unable to find coalition partners, while the Ciudadanos party came in fourth.

Rivera announced Tuesday morning that if his party's six conditions were met, he would be willing to negotiate a coalition with another party.

The Ciudadanos conditions are: a ban on anyone under investigation on corruption charges holding public office, the elimination of special legal protection for politicians, electoral reform to try to change Spain's closed list system, an end to government pardons of politicians, term limits, and a parliamentary investigation into supposed the fraudulent funding in the Popular Party.

The PSOE, which came in second in June elections, conducted talks with the PP at the beginning of August, but has since ruled out any coalition with the PP.

Unidos Podemos, a left-wing coalition formed by Podemos and the United Left, gained influence and popularity and came in third in June. They have repeatedly stated that they will not support the right-wing government of Rajoy and the PP.
