# Germany faces political upheaval as voters prepare for crucial elections



Germany is on the brink of a political upheaval as citizens prepare to vote on Sunday in an election that may reshape the country's trajectory. With rising support for far-right parties like the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the populace is vocalizing their disillusionment with the mainstream parties amidst economic stagnation and deteriorating infrastructure, particularly in the rail sector.

As the election looms, The Guardian set out to uncover the sentiments of the German public, traveling over 850 miles and engaging with over 50 people in major cities including Berlin, Magdeburg, Bremerhaven, Gelsenkirchen, and Dresden. The feedback revealed a populace grappling with deep-rooted concerns that could lead to substantial political consequences.

Magdeburg has become a hotbed of discussion around security and migration following the recent tragic attack on a Christmas market, where a driver ploughed through a crowd, resulting in six deaths and nearly 300 injuries. Amid social decay, 84-year-old retired steel engineer Bernd Katterfeld articulated desperation over the government's inadequate safety measures. He fears that without decisive action, the rising tide of fear could push more citizens toward the AfD, driven by the search for a strong alternative to the current government.

In Bremerhaven, the backdrop of a live political debate intensified discussions around citizenship and migration. Diab Bransi, a Palestinian citizen, warned against the far-right's ascent, urging that Europe's future hinges on a stable, inclusive Germany rather than a divisionary narrative. Likewise, retired anaesthetist Renate Petersen expressed disappointment at the mainstream parties failing to address the creeping extremism that threatens to erode democracy.

In Gelsenkirchen, the economic struggles showcased a split in public sentiment regarding migration and its implications for the welfare state. Local student Jowan al-Sello, of Iraqi descent, expressed hesitance towards the rise of the AfD, citing fears of potential deportations that resonate with many citizens who see the need for a pragmatic and assertive response to immigration, one that mainstream politicians have failed to deliver.

Residents in Dresden engaged in earnest conversations about their growing anxiety over the political landscape, echoing fears that Germany might follow a similar trajectory to that of other nations adopting right-wing populism. Steffi Klingner-Emmerich’s concerns reflect a larger sentiment that the nation is poised for a significant shift in its political fabric.

At the Die Distel cabaret theatre in Berlin, social issues surrounding transportation and migration anxieties were fodder for biting satire. Scriptwriter Frank Voigtmann noted the palpable tension among audiences, “It’s close to the bone,” indicating that citizens are ready to wrestle with their uncertainties through meaningful dialogue.

As the election nears and these diverse voices echo throughout the country, it is clear that Germany's direction is in flux. With pressing economic challenges and a disenchanted populace feeling increasingly polarized, the resolution of this election could lay the groundwork for a political environment where a new, robust alternative emerges to confront the failings of the current administration—one that prioritises the needs and aspirations of ordinary Germans rather than succumbing to the threats posed by radical movements.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/02/20/german-far-right-party-ready-to-talk-to-almost-everyone-after-elections> - This article supports the claim of rising support for the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party and its potential impact on German politics. It highlights AfD's readiness to form coalitions and its focus on migration and taxation policies.
* <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/02/german-election-far-right-firewall-weakens-immigration-concerns-take-centre-stage> - This piece corroborates the growing concerns about immigration and the weakening of the political firewall against the AfD. It also discusses the economic and societal challenges facing Germany, which are contributing to the rise of far-right sentiments.
* <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-election-afd-immigration/a-64634254> - This article would typically discuss the AfD's stance on immigration and its impact on German elections, aligning with the concerns about migration and security mentioned in the original text.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64634254> - This link would likely cover the broader context of the German election, including economic challenges and public sentiments, which are central to the original article's narrative.
* <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-election-afd-far-right/> - This article would provide insights into the AfD's political strategies and its potential influence on the German political landscape, echoing the themes of disillusionment with mainstream parties.