

Germany still does not have a government with a majority

I wrote after the German election that after her large loss of votes and seats Mrs Merkel would find it difficult to form a coalition. Her own party polled just 26.8%. So it has proved. I drew a contrast with Mrs May and the Conservatives where the vote went up to 42.4% and who could form a coalition with the DUP.

Two months on she missed the deadline for agreement yesterday. It was difficult enough keeping her coalition with the CDU's sister party the CSU to take her up to 32.9% of the votes. To consolidate that she needed to reassure on migration which makes it more difficult to get the Greens into a government. The Free Democrats and the Greens also have substantial disagreements with each other over coal, energy generally and approach to business.

It is still possible they could reach an agreement, but the long delays imply the best that could happen for Mrs Merkel is a weak government with limited capability given the big disagreements between the parties. If she fails to form a coalition her party may want a new leader and there might be another election.