

Winning party calls for admission into Community 'as soon as possible'

Triumph for Democratic Forum in Hungarian vote

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HUNGARY's new rulers called for the country's rapid access to the European Community yesterday as the outlines of the new government began to take shape.

The triumphant Democratic Forum predicted it will head a majority coalition government following its landslide success in the second round of the parliamentary elections on Sunday.

"I am confident we will gain 60 per cent of the mandates in parliament," said a beaming Jozsef Antall, the Forum president and almost certainly the new prime minister. The final results gave the Forum 165 of the 386 parliamentary seats.

With the 21 seats won by its small ally, the Christian Democrats, the Forum only needs 10

of the 43 mandates won by the third-placed party, the Smallholders, to gain a parliamentary majority.

The Forum's closest rival, the Free Democrats, gained 92 seats in parliament and is likely to constitute a tough opposition for Mr Antall as the party has some of the sharpest minds and best speakers in the country.

The outgoing Socialists — previously the Communists who have ruled for the past 43 years — took 33 seats.

Mr Antall called for Hungary's entry to the EC "as soon as possible" and said the country wanted to take its place in a new security framework of "Atlantic intergration".

The Smallholders yesterday staked a claim to the agricultural portfolio, but the biggest wrangle is likely to be over its commitment to revert to the 1947 land register in returning land to those who suffered communist expropriation — a pol-

icy that the Forum and many others see as unworkable. The Christian Democrat party sent out tentative signals by pointing to its expertise in social affairs, culture and law, but said it was too early to speak of sharing out the spoils of office.

"The country's historical and political reflexes remain unchanged" despite years of Communist rule, Mr Antall said of the result.

Despite persistent allegations that the Forum benefited from a raised Hungarian national consciousness linked to the recent clashes in Transylvania between Romanians and ethnic Hungarians, Mr Antall yesterday insisted the Forum "is not, was not, and never will be nationalistic. It's an entity that preserves national values... and aims for a liberal state ruled by law," he said.

A Free Democrat leader, Magyar Balint, claimed a moral victory: "A modern, liberal

party like the Free Democrats has never scored such a victory in Hungary."

The Free Democrats, whose leadership is dominated by former dissidents, says it will act as a "sovereign, independent opposition" in parliament.

- Final results:*
- Hungarian Democratic Forum: 165 seats (42.75 %)*
 - Alliance of Free Democrats: 92 seats (23.8 %)*
 - The Independent Smallholders: 43 seats (11.1%)*
 - Hungarian Socialist Party: 33 seats (8.5 %)*
 - Alliance of Young Democrats: 21 seats (5.4 %)*
 - Christian Democrats: 21 seats (5.4 %)*
 - The Agrarian Alliance: 1 seat (0.3 %)*
 - Independent candidates: 6 seats (1.5 %)*
 - Candidates backed by several parties: 4 seats (1 %)*

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