

TAIWAN'S 2010 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

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Executive Summary

1. In Taiwan's municipal elections on November 27, 2010, the Kuomintang (KMT) won three of the five mayoral seats in Taipei, Sinbei and Greater Taichung, and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) secured two in Greater Tainan and Kaohsiung.
2. It was a win-win election with mostly positive implications for Taiwan's two-party system and future cross-strait relations between Taiwan and mainland China.
3. Although the KMT won more mayoral seats, it lost to the DPP in total vote count. Its local election records since 2008 indicate that popular support for the KMT has been declining constantly.
4. To regain popular support, the KMT needs to improve its local governors' performance, let more ordinary people enjoy the fruit of Taiwan's recovering economy, improve younger generation's identification with the party, and enhance its grassroots organizations' mobilization capability.
5. The DPP had not only garnered more votes than the KMT in the mayoral elections, but also significantly improved its vote shares and seats in the city councilor elections.
6. Additionally, the DPP has maintained its trend of gaining popular support since the 2009 county/city governor elections and expanded its support base from the traditional strongholds in the south to central and northern Taiwan.
7. However, the DPP's new moderate and peaceful campaign strategy was challenged by pro-independence hardliners in the party. The hardliners still have substantial popular support, especially in the south.

8. Although the two camps basically avoided cross-strait issues such as the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement issue in the elections, Taiwan's China policy will certainly become one of the most important issues in the 2012 presidential race.
9. DPP chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen has established a think tank to help develop a new moderate China policy that can converge conflicting stances in the party.
10. The KMT has begun to tackle problems concerning its local branches and young voters, and it is expecting to see more people enjoying Taiwan's reviving economy next year.