
SPAIN'S FAR-LEFT PARTY LEADER WINS CONFIDENCE VOTE AFTER LUXURY HOME OUTCRY

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Pablo Iglesias and his partner Irene Montero survived a confidence vote in their left-wing Podemos party after the two purchased a luxury home near Madrid. Iglesias previously criticized politicians who "live in villas."

Two leaders of Spain's far-left party won a confidence vote on Sunday after it was revealed that the couple bought a house outside of Madrid that cost over €600,000 (\$699,000).

Podemos party leader Pablo Iglesias and the party's spokesperson Irene Montero were accused of betraying the party's left wing principles by purchasing the home, which has a swimming pool and a guest house.

Iglesias and Montero won 68 percent out of nearly 190,000 votes that were cast, with almost a third voting against them.

The party's 500,000 members were able to vote online from Tuesday through Sunday over whether the couple should remain in their roles.

The couple, who are expecting twins, defended their purchase by saying they intended to live in the home and that it wasn't a case of real estate speculation.

Accused of hypocrisy

Iglesias in particular came under fire for the move among Podemos party members.

In the past, the party head frequently noted he was proud of the fact he lived in an apartment in a working class Madrid neighborhood and bought his clothes at supermarkets.

Iglesias also used to criticize politicians who "do not know how much a coffee costs" or who "live in villas."

Podemos was created in 2014 in opposition to austerity measures during the financial crisis and pledges to represent "the people" against "the caste" — or Spain's business and political elites.

Podemos is now one of Spain's four main political parties, winning around a fifth of the vote in the 2016 general election. The party also matches or overtakes Spain's traditional left-wing party, the

Socialists (PSOE) in opinion polls.

Political analysts say that the Iglesias' luxury house scandal could tarnish the party's image that its leaders were ordinary Spaniards who defended and understood the concerns of workers.

Kaynak/Source: