



GERMAN LEFT PARTY 'PARTLY TO BLAME' FOR RISE OF FAR-RIGHT, COMMISSIONER SAYS

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Marco Wanderwitz has said the party needs to take responsibility for the rise of the far-right AfD in Germany. His remarks come on the back of the election of a conservative state premier thanks to AfD support.

The recently installed Government's Commissioner for the eastern states, Marco Wanderwitz (CDU), said Monday that the Left party should take some the blame for the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

"The AfD benefits a bit from what the Left Party has been saying for 30 years, that everything is bad," he told German media outlet Redaktionsnetzwerk. "They can reap [the benefits of] that now, many protest voters have gone to the AfD."

The comments come in the aftermath of the Thuringia debacle where Thomas Kemmerich was voted in as state premier by the CDU, his own business-friendly Free Democrats Party (FDP) and the AfD.

AfD cooperation previously ruled out

Until that moment, all other German political parties had ruled out cooperation with the AfD at any level of government, and the outcome caused nationwide outrage as many pointed out the move to support Kemmerich on the part of the AfD was predictable. Chancellor Angela Merkel called it "unacceptable" and Kemmerich was forced to resign a day later without naming his Cabinet.

Commissioner Wanderwitz stressed that he did not put the Left party on the same level of "radicalism" as the AfD, "but that doesn't mean, of course, that we don't have any boundaries to the left. In addition, there are still people in the Left party who were on the wrong side of justice in the GDR." GDR is the shortened name for the former East Germany.

jsi/ng (AFP, dpa)