



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

On 1 July this year, Mexico elected a new President and a new Congress. Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) will take up office on 1 December. This election result means that his party will once again hold the reins after an absence of two terms in which the presidency has been occupied by Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) representatives. In the past, the PRI had held the presidency for 71 years. This dominance had some disastrous consequences, particularly in the areas of corruption and internal security. But now the old "state party" is back and has a fresh young face at its helm. It remains to be seen to what extent Peña Nieto will be able to break down the fortifications of the old party structures. The new government deserves a fair chance. The fact that the elections passed off peacefully and that the PAN accepted the will of the voters shows that democracy in Mexico has gained a strong foothold.

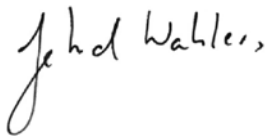
At the end of its 12 years in office, the PAN can claim numerous successes. In this issue, Stefan Jost explains why these achievements were not rewarded and why the party even fell back into third place behind the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). The political successes of the PAN over recent years cannot be detracted from the election results. As far as foreign policy is concerned, Mexico has strengthened its role in the region. The country has taken the lead on the environment and made a particularly good impression when it hosted the climate summit in Cancún. As one of three Latin American members of the G20, and, with Chile, the only representative of the subcontinent in the OECD, Mexico is also becoming increasingly attractive to foreign investors. Today it has more bilateral free trade agreements than almost any other country on earth.

During its term in government, the PAN can also take credit for the Transparency Law that was passed under President Vicente Fox, a law that has proven to be an effective tool in the fight against corruption. The policies pursued by his successor, Felipe Calderón, in the battle against organised crime also produced some major victories. His campaign against the drug cartels attracted strong criticism because of its massive use of the military, but it has helped to make both Mexico and the whole region somewhat safer. Still, there is no denying that huge problems remain in this respect. Neither Fox nor Calderón were able to bring about the comprehensive police reforms that are so urgently needed. However, despite so much that still remains to be done, the PAN hands over a country that is largely in good order and has good prospects for growth.

It is likely that President Peña Nieto will continue the fight against drug crime, but he may choose to take a different approach. During his election campaign he announced that he would reduce the army presence. He will therefore presumably be pursuing old-style PRI policies of seeking compromises with the cartels with a view to stabilising the country's internal security. It is also likely that Peña Nieto will want to continue to follow the sound economic direction set by the PAN government. However, if he is to make this succeed, he will need to pass several urgently-needed reforms that the PRI blocked when it was in opposition, notably in the areas of energy policy and the labour market. In this issue, Günther Maihold looks at the challenges the country faces with respect to economic policy.

Reform of the police and justice system is also long overdue. However, as Wolfgang Muno explains in his article, there have been a series of successes in recent years, particularly at federal state level. Under Calderón, Mexico incorporated all international human rights conventions into its constitution, but despite this, most Mexican correction facilities still do not operate under conditions commensurate with a democratic state under the rule of law. Suspects are often detained for months without being charged, something that particularly affects the poorest members of society and those with no contacts in organised crime as they are unable to afford good lawyers.

New president Peña Nieto will find he is reliant on the support of the opposition to push through the much-needed reforms in all policy areas as he does not have a majority in parliament. Constitutionally the role of the president is relatively weak. As opposition party, the PAN will most probably take a more constructive stance than that taken by Peña Nieto's own party in recent years. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has worked with the PAN for many years and will continue to do its utmost to support its efforts to promote reform. These efforts can help the party to regain its old strength and to make the most of its opposition role to press forward with Mexico's development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

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Deputy Secretary General

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