

Latvia Snubs Russia Party

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RIGA, Latvia — Two center-right Latvian parties, Unity and Zatlers' Reform Party, decided on Tuesday to form a coalition with the National Alliance, which includes radical nationalists, in a move to squeeze out the pro-Russia party that topped the polls in last month's election.

The announcement came after weeks of difficult talks that largely revolved around ethnicity rather than economic policy. The move means that Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis will keep his job.

Many had hoped that the center-left Harmony Party, which predominantly consists of ethnic Russians and other minorities, would be given a role in the new coalition. Not once in Latvia's 20 years of post-Soviet independence has a party catering to the interests of its large ethnic Russian minority been included in the government.

Traditional Latvian parties regard Harmony Center, which won 31 seats in last month's snap elections, as politically risky given its close ties with United Russia.

(AP)

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