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## GERMANY'S CDU BACKS LASCHET OVER SÖDER TO RUN AS CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE

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By Matthew Karnitschnig

The contest over who should become Germanys conservative nominee for chancellor took a dramatic turn early Tuesday after the Christian Democrats (CDU) backed their party leader Armin Laschet over his Bavarian rival, Markus Söder.

In a secret ballot that came at the end of a more than seven-hour-long virtual meeting of the CDUs executive committees, Laschet won 77.5 percent of the votes cast to Söders 22.5 percent, with 40 ballots deemed valid and six abstentions. Though Laschets result looked impressive at first glance, it dropped to 67 percent when factoring in the abstentions □ underwhelming, considering the voters were all colleagues from his own party.

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