

Electoral Systems Used in OECD Countries, Showing the Percentage of Women in National Legislatures and Voter Participation in the Last National Election

Prepared by Dr. Ian Urquhart for Linda Duncan MP Town Hall on Electoral Reform, Sept. 8, 2016

First Past the Post	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	(N=3)	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank
United Kingdom	17	29.6	21	61.1
Canada	23	26.0	18	62.1
United States	29	19.4	27	53.6

List Prop. Representation	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	(N=23)	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank
<i>Sweden</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>43.6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>82.6</i>
<i>Finland</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>41.5</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>73.1</i>
<i>Iceland</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>41.3</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>80.0</i>
<i>Norway</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>39.6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>77.9</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>39.3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>87.2</i>
<i>Spain</i>	7	39.1	22	60.9
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>37.4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>80.3</i>
<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>37.3</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>71.0</i>
<i>Slovenia</i>	10	36.7	29	54.1
<i>Portugal</i>	12	34.8	20	61.8
<i>Switzerland</i>	13	32.0	34	38.6
<i>Italy</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>31.0</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>68.5</i>
<i>Austria</i>	16	30.6	21	61.1
<i>Luxembourg</i>	19	28.3	26	55.1
<i>Poland</i>	20	27.4	30	53.8
<i>Israel</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>76.1</i>
Estonia	24	23.8	28	54.7
Czech. Republic	26	20.0	23	60.0
Slovak Republic	27	20.0	24	59.4
Greece	28	19.7	19	62.1
Latvia	30	18.0	32	51.7
Chile	32	15.8	33	45.7
<i>Turkey</i>	33	14.9	2	84.3

- Countries in bold italics surpass Canada in terms of both the percentage of women in national legislatures **and** voter participation (9 of 23 countries using a list form of PR).

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Mixed Member Proportional	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	(N=4)	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank
<i>Mexico</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>42.4</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>64.6</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>36.5</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>66.0</i>
<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>31.4</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>73.2</i>
<i>Hungary</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>10.1</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>63.4</i>

- Countries in bold italics surpass Canada in terms of both the percentage of women in national legislatures **and** voter participation (3 of 4 countries using mixed member proportional – a system that combines constituency representation with proportionality).

- Hungary surpasses Canada in terms of voter participation.

Parallel	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	(N=2)	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank
<i>South Korea</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>17.0</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>80.4</i>
Japan	35	9.5	31	52.0

- South Korea surpasses Canada in terms of voter participation.

STV	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	(N=1)	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank
Ireland	25	22.2	25	58.0

Two Round System	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	(N=1)	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank
<i>France</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>26.2</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>71.2</i>

- France surpasses Canada in terms of both the percentage of women in national legislatures (very marginally) **and** voter participation.

Alternative Vote (N=1)	Women in National Legislatures		Voter Participation (most recent national election)	
	OECD Rank	Members (%)	OECD Rank	% of voting age population
<i>Australia</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>28.7</i>		

- Australia surpasses Canada in terms of the percentage of women in the national legislature. The Pew Center reported that 91.0% of registered voters cast a ballot in the 2016 election.

Compulsory Voting

The following OECD countries have compulsory voting laws that are enforced: Australia, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Turkey. Compulsory voting is practiced in only one of Switzerland's 26 cantons. Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, "Compulsory Voting," http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm

Sources:

The data on the percentages of women in national legislation as of August 1, 2016 are from Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in national parliaments," <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

The data on voter turnout are from Drew Desilver, "U.S. voter turnout trails most developed countries," *PewResearchCenter*, August 2, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/02/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/>

Electoral System Definitions:

These definitions may be found at International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, "Glossary of Terms," <http://www.idea.int/esd/glossary.cfm#>

First Past the Post: "First Past The Post is the simplest form of plurality/majority electoral system. The winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes. The system uses single-member districts and the voters vote for candidates rather than political parties."

List PR: "Under a List Proportional Representation (List PR) system each party or grouping presents a list of candidates for a multi-member electoral district, the voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote. In some (closed list) systems the winning candidates are taken from the lists in order of their position on the lists. If the lists are 'open' or 'free' the voters can influence the order of the candidates by marking individual preferences."

Mixed Member Proportional: "Mixed Member Proportional is a mixed system in which the choices expressed by the voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems—one List PR system and (usually) one plurality/majority system—where the List PR system compensates for the disproportionality in the results from the plurality/majority system."

Parallel: "A Parallel System is a mixed system in which the choices expressed by the voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems—one List PR system

and (usually) one plurality/majority system—but where no account is taken of the seats allocated under the first system in calculating the results in the second system.”

Single Transferable Vote: “The Single Transferable Vote is a preferential system in which the voter has one vote in a multi-member district and the candidates that surpass a specified quota of first preference votes are immediately elected. In successive counts, votes are redistributed from least successful candidates, who are eliminated, and votes surplus to the quota are redistributed from successful candidates, until sufficient candidates are declared elected. Voters normally vote for candidates rather than political parties, although a party-list option is possible.”

Two Round System: “The Two-Round System is a plurality/majority system in which a second election is held if no candidate or party achieves a given level of votes, most commonly an absolute majority (50 per cent plus one), in the first election round. A Two-Round System may take a majority-plurality form—more than two candidates contest the second round and the one wins the highest number of votes in the second round is elected, regardless of whether they have won an absolute majority—or a majority run-off form—only the top two candidates in the first round contest the second round.”

Alternative Vote: “The Alternative Vote is a preferential plurality/majority system used in single-member districts. Voters use numbers to mark their preferences on the ballot paper. A candidate who receives an absolute majority (50 per cent plus 1) of valid first preference votes is declared elected. If no candidate achieves an absolute majority of first preferences, the least successful candidates are eliminated and their votes reallocated according to their second preferences until one candidate has an absolute majority. Voters vote for candidates rather than political parties.”

Questions?:

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