

# Case study: equal voting power and boundary delimitation in Lithuania

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2015, Chisinau

# The need for boundary delimitation

- Presidential election – NO [constituency is the whole territory of the country]
- Elections to the European Parliament – NO [constituency is the whole territory of the country]
- Municipality elections – NO [constituency coincides with the administrative boundaries of the municipality; the number of councillors is adjusted by the CEC according to the number of residents]
- Parliamentary elections – YES [71 single-member constituencies]

# The system of voting in the Parliamentary Elections

- Parliamentary elections in Lithuania is of mixed (Parallel) system. 141 Members of Parliament (MPs)
- 71 MPs elected in the single-member constituencies under the majority vote system with run-off voting (also called Two Round System (TRS)) – **Constituencies should be equal**
- 70 MPs elected in 1 multi-member system under the proportional electoral system (PR) with party-list proportional representation – **Constituency is the whole territory of the country.**

# Legal framework for the equal single-member constituencies

- According to the Law on Elections to the Seimas, every citizen shall have one vote in a single-member constituency and one vote in the multi-member constituency, and these votes shall have the same value as the votes of any other citizen who has the right to vote – **equal voting rights**
- The law provides that the number of voters in constituencies must be from 0.8 to 1.2 of the average number of voters in all single-member constituencies – **equal voting power**
- The Code of Good Practise in electoral matters (Venice Commission) allows 10 % departure (15 % in exceptional cases)

# Unequal voting power

- Out of 71 single-member constituencies  
8 constituencies - over 120 %  
5 constituencies – under 80 %  
18 % of constituencies do not comply with the requirements of the law.  
55 % of constituencies do not fit into range from 90 % - 110 %

The need of the boundary delimitation is obvious

# Major reform



# Pros and cons of the major reform

- Equal voting power according to the international standards (Venice Commission)
- No need for the boundary delimitation in the nearest future
- One year before Parliamentary election
- Unhappy MPs elected in the single-member constituencies that will be rearranged

# Process of the boundary delimitation

- The CEC employs geographer, who prepares the project according to the topography and infrastructure of the country, the trends in migration. He uses graphical tools to display the maps of the boundaries of the constituencies.
- The CEC has an information system ([www.rinkejopuslapis.lt](http://www.rinkejopuslapis.lt)) which allows to administer the boundaries for the particular polling station and display it on the map.
- The final decision is taken by the CEC.



# Electronic tools – more possibilities

- Information system of the CEC also enables the voters to vote in any polling station, when constituency is the whole territory of the country.

For example, during the Presidential elections, if you are registered in Vilnius, but you want to vote in the polling station by the sea, you may do that because of the electronic voters' register and computerized polling station.

# Equal votes

- The review of the boundaries of the 71 single-member constituencies will ensure the equality amongst the voters' voting rights.
- And the equality amongst the candidates (it is considered more prestigious to win in the single-member constituency)
- An effect of disproportionate election results under the majority system (single-member constituencies) is in part neutralized by the system of proportional representation.

# QUESTIONS FOR THE AUDIENCE

- Do the international standards for boundary delimitation are applicable only to the unitary states and not to the federations?
- How do we calculate the number of voters? Do we include all living abroad? Do the voters need to preregister?
- Can we reach an absolute equality between the single-member constituencies, there will always be constituencies with the higher ratio of voters than others?
- Can we refuse majority voting system?

# QUESTIONS

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