EUROPEAN ELECTION 2019 IN LATVIA

LJUBLJANA
26 SEPTEMBER 2019
BACKGROUND

- 8 MEPs
- Single constituency
- Sainte-Laguë divisors (1; 3; 5)
- 5% threshold but natural threshold is higher
- Open lists: pluses for the preferred candidates, strikeouts for unwanted ones
- Tradition in general elections to vote anywhere without previous notice
NOVELTIES IN 2019

• Early voting anywhere without previous notice
  - If voter goes to another polling station poll workers send an online request to voter’s polling station
  - If system inoperable voting in the assigned polling stations
  - Political green light less than 2 months before

• Polling stations abroad
  - In embassies or on request of voters
  - Self-registration of voters
HOW IT WENT

- Early voting anywhere
  - Lines in the most popular polling stations
  - System was down half of the time
  - Turnout went 30.2% to 33.5% (6.8% to 11.2% in the early voting)

- Polling stations abroad
  - 44 in embassies, 0 on request of voters (123 in the last general election)
  - Few self-registered
  - Turnout went 2370 to 2506 (31 793 in the last general election)

- Only one minor party complained, court dismissed the complaint
LESSONS

- There is a public demand for voting anywhere
- IT systems better be in place well before elections
- Backup better be double envelopes
- System used in the European election may choke with higher turnout e.g. in general elections
- Establishment of polling stations abroad and self-registration too cumbersome; may cause outcry in general elections