

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