

## Minority Political Party Representation in EU28, Norway and Switzerland

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OUTCOME	SPECIAL RULES AT NATIONAL LEVEL	SPECIAL RULES AT LAND/COUNTY/DISTRICT LEVEL	RESERVED SEATS IN PARLIAMENT	THRESHOLD EXEMPTIONS FOR NATIONAL MINORITY PARTIES	REPRESENTED AT NATIONAL LEVEL PARLIAMENT <sup>1</sup>	REPRESENTED AT LAND/COUNTY/DISTRICT LEVEL PARLIAMENT	GOVERNMENT COALITIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL INCLUDE MINORITY PARTY	GOVERNMENT COALITIONS AT LAND/COUNTY/DISTRICT LEVEL INCLUDE MINORITY PARTY	PROVISIONS APPLY TO <u>ALL</u> MINORITIES EQUALLY	PROVISIONS APPLY TO <u>ONLY</u> SPECIFIC MINORITIES
AUSTRIA	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
BELGIUM	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>4</sup>	No	No	Yes
BULGARIA	No	No	No	No	No <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
CROATIA	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>6</sup>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>7</sup>	No	No	Yes
CYPRUS	Yes	No	Yes <sup>8</sup>	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
CZECH REPUBLIC	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
DENMARK	Yes	Yes <sup>9</sup>	Yes <sup>10</sup>	No <sup>11</sup>	No	Yes <sup>12</sup>	No	No	No	Yes <sup>13</sup>
ESTONIA	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
FINLAND	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>14</sup>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>15</sup>	No	No	Yes
FRANCE	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
GERMANY	Yes	Yes	No	Yes <sup>16</sup>	No	Yes	No	Yes <sup>17</sup>	No	Yes
GREECE	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A <sup>18</sup>
HUNGARY	No <sup>19</sup>	No <sup>20</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
IRELAND	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
ITALY	Yes	Yes	No	Yes <sup>21</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No <sup>22</sup>	No	Yes <sup>23</sup>
LATVIA	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A
LITHUANIA	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>24</sup>	Yes	N/A	N/A
LUXEMBOURG	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
MALTA	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
NETHERLANDS	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>25</sup>	No	N/A	N/A
NORWAY	No	Yes <sup>26</sup>	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
POLAND	Yes	No	No	Yes <sup>27</sup>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PORTUGAL	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
ROMANIA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes <sup>28</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes/No <sup>29</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>30</sup>
SLOVAKIA	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A
SLOVENIA	Yes	No	Yes <sup>31</sup>	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
SPAIN	No	No	No	No	No	No	No <sup>32</sup>	No	N/A	N/A
SWEDEN	No	Yes <sup>33</sup>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes <sup>34</sup>
SWITZERLAND	Yes <sup>35</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>36</sup>	No	Yes	Yes <sup>37</sup>	Yes/No <sup>38</sup>	Yes/No	Yes <sup>39</sup>	No

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<sup>1</sup> Liaison offices not included

<sup>2</sup> Every Community has its own parliament (Flemish Parliament, Parliament of French-Speaking Community, Parliament of German-Speaking Community)

<sup>3</sup> One reserved seat for German-speaking community

<sup>4</sup> Current coalition government includes Flemish and French speaking parties.

<sup>5</sup> Constitution does not allow registering a political party on the ethnic ground; however the Movement for Rights and Freedoms represents the Turkish minority.

<sup>6</sup> All recognized national minorities elect representatives to reserved seats, some on own lists, some on joint lists.

<sup>7</sup> The Istrian Democratic Assembly is currently in coalition with the Social Democrats and the Croatian People's Party.

<sup>8</sup> Seats in parliament divided 70%/30% Greek and Turkish communities.

<sup>9</sup> The German minority party enjoys a right to non-voting representation in the four local councils of Southern Jutland if 25% of 'cheapest' mandate is achieved.

<sup>10</sup> Greenland and the Faroe Islands have each two reserved seats in the national parliament.

<sup>11</sup> The German minority party is however exempt from the standard requirements to run for national parliament but is not currently participating in national elections.

<sup>12</sup> The German minority party achieved representation in the four local councils in Southern Denmark during last regional elections

<sup>13</sup> German minority as well as Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

<sup>14</sup> One reserved seat for the Swedish-speaking minority of the Aaland Islands within the delegation of the Swedish People's Party.

<sup>15</sup> The Swedish People's Party of Finland is in the coalition

<sup>16</sup> At the sub-federal level in the Land of Schleswig-Holstein the Danish-Frisian minority Party enjoys exemption from the 5% threshold.

<sup>17</sup> The SSW, party of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein, has since the elections in May 2012 been in coalition with the SPD and the Green Party in the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament.

<sup>18</sup> Religious minorities enjoy protection according to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne

<sup>19</sup> New electoral legislation has been adopted which will be enforced starting with 2014. The arrangements summarized here are those currently applicable.

<sup>20</sup> The constitution provides for the establishment of minority self-governments, locally and also at national level. These bodies act as representatives of the various minorities by expressing their opinion on bills of legislation affecting minorities. Similarly, the law provides for the establishment of minority self-governments in those settlements with substantial minority populations; they are granted extensive consent and consultation rights.

<sup>21</sup> At provincial level, the system for parliamentary representation is proportional, with no thresholds for accessing the provincial parliament. These provisions apply in the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano.

<sup>22</sup> However, the minority party representing the German-speakers, SVP, is in majority in the local parliament of the Province of Bolzano.

<sup>23</sup> Refers to German-speaking minority of South Tyrol.

<sup>24</sup> The Lithuanian Polish Election Action is part of the government coalition formed as a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections.

<sup>25</sup> The Frisian National Party as part of the OSF group is currently part of the governing coalition that took office in Nov 2012.

<sup>26</sup> The Sami indigenous people have their own parliament. However, they are not represented in the national parliament.

<sup>27</sup> National minority parties are exempt from the 5% threshold to the national parliament.

<sup>28</sup> National minority parties enjoy an exemption from the 5% threshold to the national parliament. To gain a seat in the Chamber of Deputies, a party representing a national minority must obtain 10% of the average number of votes obtained by a mainstream deputy. Where more parties compete for representing the same national minority, the one obtaining the highest number of votes will enter Parliament (provided it obtained at least 10% of the average number of votes obtained by a mainstream deputy).

<sup>29</sup> National elections took place on 9 December 2012. At the moment of writing there are negotiations for the inclusion of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania in the ruling coalition, alongside the Social Liberal Union.

<sup>30</sup> While the legislation does not nominate the ethnic groups it recognizes as national minorities, the electoral law states that it defines national minorities as those ethnic groups represented in the Council of National Minorities. There are 19 national minorities represented in the Council, including a representative of the Hungarian minority. The Hungarian minority however does not make use of the threshold exemption for accessing Parliament, as it has constantly been able to pass the general 5% electoral threshold.

<sup>31</sup> The constitution provides for one reserved seat each for the Hungarian and the Italian minorities.

<sup>32</sup> Although the Spanish Constitution does not formally recognise or define ethnic minorities, it does recognise several autonomous communities, which have representative parties participating in national elections. In 2011 the Navarrese People's Union entered an alliance with the People's Party.

<sup>33</sup> The Sami indigenous people have their own parliament, a national administrative authority formed in 1993 to ensure that the Sami can decide about their cultural and also to some extent their commercial development.

<sup>34</sup> The Swedish Sami people.

<sup>35</sup> There are no national minority parties in Switzerland. Representation is based on language.

<sup>36</sup> Smaller cantons are guaranteed one seat.

<sup>37</sup> Complex rules are in place in all cantons regarding ensuring minority representation

<sup>38</sup> Seats in the government are reserved for the French and Italian minorities. This is not a legal provision but an 'unwritten' rule.

<sup>39</sup> There is a right to call a referendum in place for all members of society which enables minorities to contest proposed legislation.