

# Citizens' Participation

**LIECHTENSTEIN**

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# Voting Rights

- Voting right at national level
  - Liechtenstein nationals
  - Residence in Liechtenstein
  - 18+ years old
- Voting right at local level
  - Liechtenstein nationals
  - Residence in the municipality
  - 18+ years old

# Election Right (I)

- National level

- 25 Members of Parliament (*Landtag*) elected in two constituencies
  - 15 in “*Oberland*”, 10 in “*Unterland*”
  - four-year term
  - Proportional election system in the two constituencies
  - 8 per cent threshold of all party votes at national level to be admitted to attribution of mandates
- Government nominated by Parliament and appointed by the Prince
  - Small parties sometimes support the idea of popular election of government
  - No concrete steps the direct election of parliament so far

# Election Right (II)

- Regional level
  - No regional level in place

# Election Right (III)

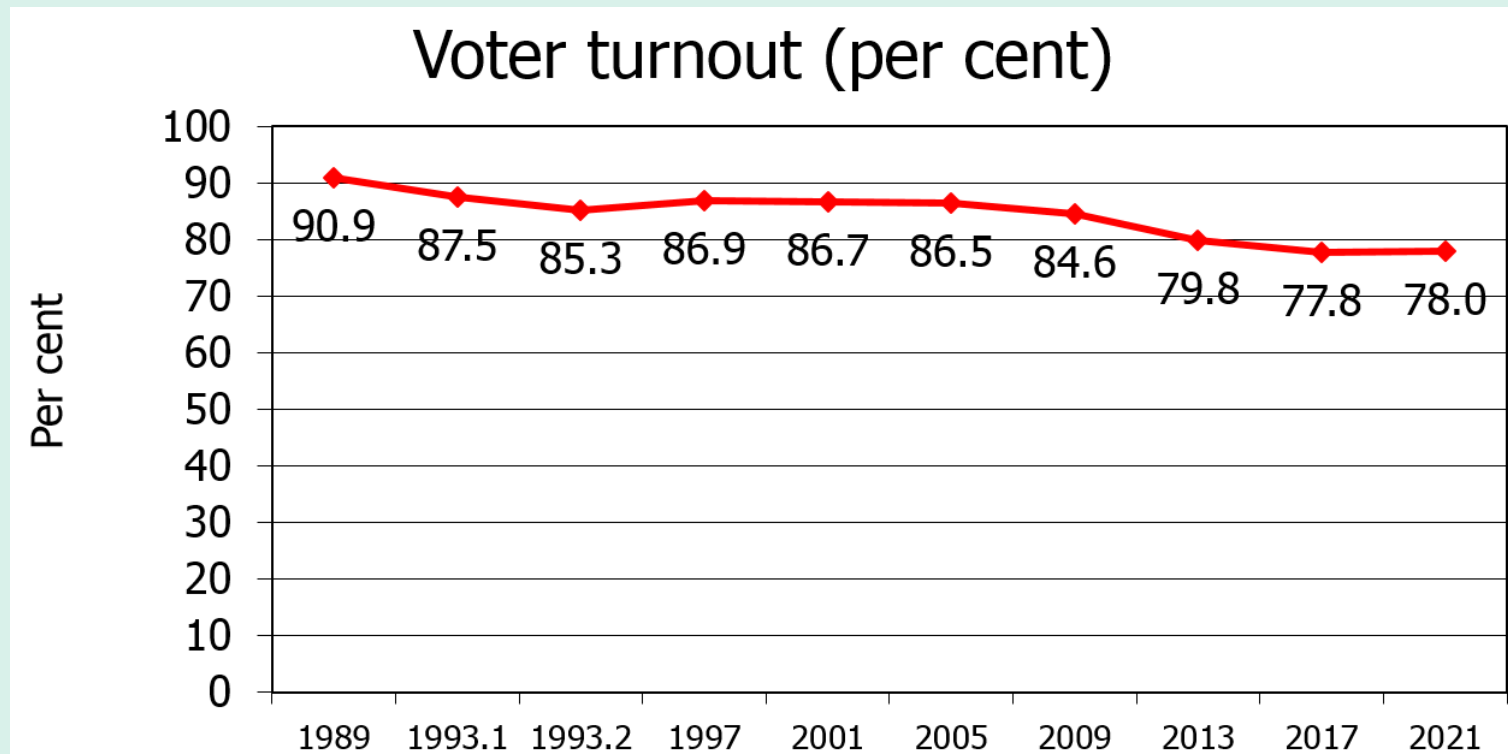
- Local level
  - Election of Mayor of the municipality
    - Majority vote
  - Election of municipal council
    - Proportional election system
    - Election of mayor and council on the same day
    - Number of council member (including mayor) varies from 7 to 13 members, depending on the number of inhabitants and the municipal order
  - Election of Municipal Auditing Commission (“*Geschäftsprüfungskommission*”)
    - Majority vote

# Election Right (IV)

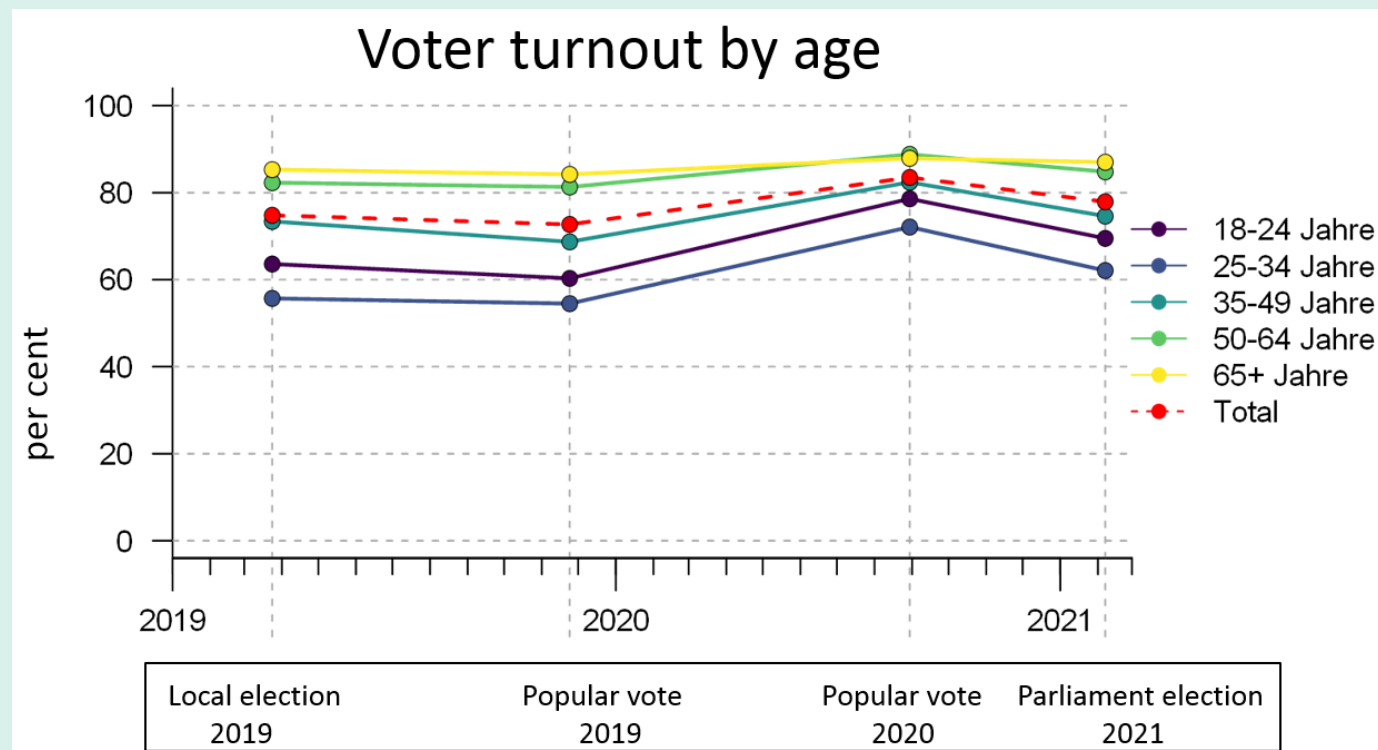
- Others

- Possible election of judges by the people
  - Only if selection committee and parliament do not agree on new judges
  - Introduced in 2003
  - No popular election of judges until present

# Voter turnout in national elections



# Participation by social demographics





# Direct Democracy (I)

- Instruments of DD at national level
  - Initiative by the people (popular initiative)
    - -> popular vote, if parliament does not approve (binding to parliament)
    - Law, constitution, non-confidence in Prince, abolish monarchy
    - Counterproposal of parliament permitted
  - Referendum by the people against parliament decisions
    - -> popular vote (binding)
    - Concerning laws, finance decisions and international treaties
  - Referendum by authorities
    - Parliament can submit its own decisions to a ballot
  - Mandatory referendums
    - Mandatory final decision by the people in case of procedure to abolish monarchy
  - Veto right of the Prince
    - Veto to parliament decisions, popular votes after referendum and popular initiatives

# Direct Democracy (II)

- Other instruments of DD at national level
  - Non-confidence in Prince
    - -> Appeal to the Princely House (Family)
  - Abolish monarchy
    - Popular vote to draft a republican constitution by parliament
    - -> Final decision by the people
  - Nomination and election of judges
    - Only if the selection committee and the parliament do not agree on their own proposals
  - Popular initiative for convocation or dissolution of parliament
    - -> Popular vote

# Direct Democracy (III)

- Instruments of DD at local level
  - Initiative by the local people
    - -> Popular vote (binding)
  - Referendum by the local people against decisions of municipal council
    - -> Popular vote (binding)
  - Referendum by authorities
    - Not existing at local level
  - Mandatory popular vote
    - Municipality order; finance decisions above certain threshold; change of municipal boundaries; other business according to the municipality act and the municipality order
  - Secession right of municipalities
    - Municipalities are allowed to separate from the state

# Practice of Direct Democracy

	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Frequency 1921-2020</b>	<b>Popular votes</b>
Popular initiative (formulated)	1921	39	37
Popular initiative (non formulated)	1921	5	
Popular referendum (law; finances)	1921	28	27
Referendum by parliament	1921	31	31
Counterproposal of parliament	1921	6	6
Consultative referendum by parliament	1921	3	3
Initiative for convocation of parliament	1921	0	
Initiative for dissolution of parliament	1921	1	
Popular vote on international treaty	1992	1	1
Non-confidence in Prince	2003	0	
Abolish monarchy	2003	0	
Nomination of judges	2003	0	
Election of judges	2003	0	
Sezession of a municipality	2003	0	

# Other forms of citizens' participation

- Consultations in the legal process
  - Government in many cases allows to comment on drafts of legal amendments before finalizing them and forwarding them to parliament
  - NGOs, stakeholders, institutions, parties, municipalities etc. may be involved
- Ministries are in close contact to stakeholders
- Surveys are conducted if needed
- Demonstrations, sit-ins, manifestations, strikes are rather rare
- Letters to the editors of newspapers are a common method of drawing attention to concerns

# Other forms of citizens' participation

- Private Associations, NGOs etc.
  - Great variety of associations and clubs
  - Sports and leisure, culture, social affairs, ecology and nature etc.
  - Very lively association culture with high acceptance and accordingly to be taken seriously in politics

# Media (I)

- Main media in the country

- Print

- Daily newspapers “*Liechtensteiner Vaterland*” and “*Liechtensteiner Volksblatt*” are still the leading media
    - Close relationship between leading parties and the two newspapers
    - Some other print media (weekly, monthly) with minor influence

- Radio, TV

- Radio Liechtenstein owned by the state (started 1995 as a private radio station; since 2004 public)
    - 1FLTV is a private TV station with limited programme
    - Foreign TV programmes are mainly used

- Online

- Up-to-date online presence of most actors in economy, society, politics etc.

# Media (II)

- Reporters without borders 2021 World Press Freedom Index (<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>)

- Liechtenstein ranked on place 23
- Liberal media law
- Financial support of media by the state
  - To maintain and support diversity
  - To support professional media work
  - Focus on Liechtenstein news and reports
- Financial restrictions and resource problems
- Close tie between politics and media
  - Two newspapers still in partnership with leading parties

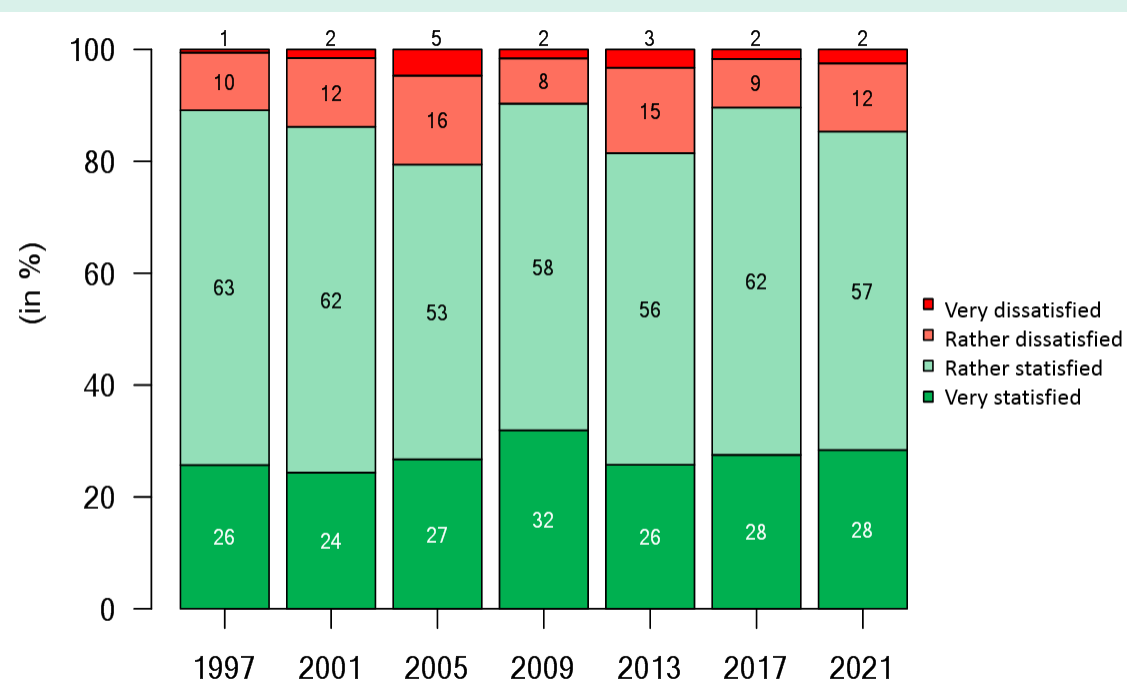
Ranking	Country
15	Estonia
16	Iceland
20	Luxembourg
23	Liechtenstein
26	Cyprus
39	Andorra
81	Malta
104	Montenegro
-	San Marino



# Satisfaction with democracy in the country

- High satisfaction with democracy

- 2005 and 2013 influenced by discussions around popular votes on the constitution
- Voters of opposition parties with higher dissatisfaction
- But never below 50 per cent “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied”



Source: Election surveys/Liechtenstein Institute

# Conclusion: Lessons and prospects

- Complex political system with many key actors: Prince, parliament, government, direct democratic instruments and their use
- Mix between monarchy and democracy
- High satisfaction with democracy, high voter turnout, vivid association culture
- However, only nationals resident in Liechtenstein have the right to vote, with a proportion of foreigners of around 33 per cent
- Limited local media diversity with a focus on print media