

### Problem

When voters prefer a small party, the choice whether to vote for this party is influenced by the voters' prediction of whether the party will qualify for list seats in parliament (i.e. make the 5% threshold or win an electorate seat), and thus have their vote counted, or whether they will fail to qualify for list seats in parliament and hence have their vote wasted.

The wasted vote has a significant influence on the overall outcome of the election. For example if a party earns 4.5% of the party vote, that is approximately 6 seats lost to that party's allies (or a net loss of about 3 when "redistribution" would likely give 3 to each "side"), which may be extremely significant when forming the government.

The fact that these thresholds exist makes reaching the 5% an unfairly difficult mark, this is because not only do parties have to convince voters that their policies are superior, but they have to convince voters that they will qualify for list seats. Therefore voting decisions are by necessity based on predictions rather than just policy as it should be. Humans are notoriously bad at making predictions and an electoral system should not be based on them.

### Suggested solutions

1) Lower the (now 5%) threshold to a lower value.

*Possible Advantages:* People could vote for who they genuinely wished to win, without fear that their vote will be wasted, and without need to predict results in order to choose their vote.

*Possible Disadvantages:* Smaller parties are much more likely to get into parliament, and in the eyes of some these parties may hold more power disproportionate to their popularity.

**OR**

2) Institute a two preference/transferable system for the party vote. Each voter would give a first preference and a second preference for the party vote. Only first preference votes would be counted and would count in the same way as a party vote does now. However, votes that are cast with first preference for a party that has failed to qualify for list seats, will be transferred to the second preference if the second preference party has qualified for list seats, on the basis of 1<sup>st</sup> preference votes.

*Advantages:* People could vote for who they genuinely wished to win, without fear that their vote will be wasted, and without need to predict results in order to choose their vote.

Thresholds (such as the current 5% and electorate seat requirement), can still be in place without compromising the above mentioned advantage.

*Disadvantages:* more complicated for voters to understand.

### Conclusion

Voters should be able to vote for whom they prefer without fear that their vote will be wasted, or the need to make predictions in order to decide on their vote.