

# The Lowest of the Low

## The European Parliament election in Croatia 2013

Part III of an OeIC study of the European Parliament elections 2009

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This report is authored by Jan Å Johansson. Richard Byfält provided research and some suggestions. Hrvoje Horvat advised on political life in Croatia.

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## Foreword

This report is the third part of a series of studies by the OEIC on the European Parliament elections of 2009. Part III examines Croatia's "by-election" to the European Parliament due to their entry into the European Union on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2013.

For analysis and remarks on the election data and figures of the European Parliament elections 2009 see part I and II available at [oeiceurope.com](http://oeiceurope.com) under "publications".

## Summary and conclusions

Croatia has not only joined the European Union, it also joined fellow EU countries in the established political tradition of having the lowest levels of voter turnout in European Parliament elections, at participation rates below all other elections and referendums in that country. European Parliament elections are the lowest of the low.

Year and month	Type of election/referendum	Turnout %
2009-12	Presidential election, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	43.96
2010-01	Presidential election, 2 <sup>nd</sup> round	50.13
2011-12	Parliament election	54.32
2012-01	EU membership referendum	43.51
2013-04	European Parliament election	20.84
2013-05	Local elections, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	47.28

Compared to all other elections or referendums held in Croatia, the turnout in the European Parliament elections was an all-time low. In the first round of the Croatian presidential elections in December 2009 43.96% voted. In the second round in January 2010 50.13 % voted. In the election to the National Parliament in December 2011 54.32% voted (the highest turnout in the country since 2009). But in the EU membership referendum held in January 2012 the turnout dropped to 43.51%. In the first elections to the European Parliament in Croatia held in April 2013 the turnout was less than half that of the turnout in the referendum – 20.84%. But in the first round of the local elections a month later the turnout went up to 47.28%. Clearly these lower participation rates show that many Croatian voters lack motivation to take part in the European Parliament election. Why?

The electoral alliance between the HDZ and HSP AS parties gave the HDZ one additional seat at the cost of the SDP. The around 65,000 personal votes that Ms Ruza Tomasic from HSP AS brought to the coalition led to the HDZ coalition taking six seats. If HSP AS would have run by themselves 65,000 votes would have been enough for only one seat, with HDZ getting four and the SDP six.

## Previous observations on voting behaviour in European Parliament elections

In OEIC's second report on the EP elections 2009 we analysed the party political connections between those residential areas with high turnout and those with low turnout. In general all over Europe there are higher turnouts in richer residential areas where the population in general tends to be well educated with salaries above average. Residential areas with lower levels of education and lower salaries have lower rates of participation. In Western Europe in particular and in the EU member states where more than 60 percent of the total EU electorate lives, the majority of voters in high turnout areas tend to vote for centre-right parties while low turnout areas tend to vote for centre-left parties.

### **How Croatian voters differ from the general trend in Europe**

It is interesting to note that Croatian voters take their own approach. In Croatia a centre-left party, the SDP, got a better result in residential areas with higher turnout while the centre-right party, HDZ, got an above average result in areas with lower turnout. Why?

One reason may be that many people who had a good life in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) have stuck with the SDP, which is historically linked to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Those Croatians who are well educated and have had a good job in the SFRY have most likely also done well in the Republic of Croatia. Hence the SDP does well in residential areas with higher turnouts.

Comparisons show that this was also the case in the election of December 2011 to the Croatian national parliament. The SDP was stronger in average residential areas with higher turnouts. However, this was a victorious election for the SDP so results were better across the board.

A second reason for the HDZ getting a good result in the European Parliament election in areas with lower average turnout might be that their coalition included HSP AS, a party which has been criticized for being “extremist” and hostile, for example, towards Serbs. Extremist parties and candidates in other European countries tend to get good results among poorer voters and those with lower level of education.

Finally, traditional left-right divisions are not that easy to apply to political parties in Croatia. Which party cares for the poor and which party sees to the interests of the better off? The right-wing HDZ has had a political message of equality and social justice, while the SDP, which has been in government since December 2011, has implemented a policy of cutbacks in the public sector to tackle the economic crisis. Because of this many voters are of the opinion that the HDZ and SDP have switched places or replaced each other on the traditional left-right political scale of Croatia’s political life. Social depression and distrust by many citizens towards political and governing structures has not improved the reputation of politics, the political class or the two largest political parties in particular.

### **The European election in Croatia mirrors the lack of interest in the EU seen elsewhere**

The election to the European Parliament in Croatia happened to take place a month before the first round of the country-wide local elections. Turnout in these two elections speak for themselves. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 citizens of Croatia for the first time voted on which party representatives should be sent to the European Parliament as the first delegation from their country. Only 20.8% of potential voters went to vote.

The citizens of Croatia were not tired of elections or of voting as such; many were just not motivated enough to go out and vote on this occasion. In the first round of the local elections held on May 19<sup>th</sup> twice as many Croatian voters, 47.3%, felt that election was important enough to motivate them to participate in the political process. The turnout in the European election in Croatia was also an all-time low in comparison to all other elections and referendums previously held in the country. Thus the Croatian electorate has joined all other voters in the EU’s existing Member States in showing their lack of interest in participating in the European Parliament elections.

This confirms the established historical trend that

- Turnout in European Parliament (EP) elections has been historically low, and the downward trend is expected to continue;<sup>1</sup>
- In comparison with other elections, the electorate is less interested in EP elections. EP elections are characterised by the highest level of apathy among voters;
- When EP elections and local or national elections and/or referendums are held at the same time, turnout in the European Parliament elections increases.

The latter conclusions are akin to the view of the EU Democrats (EUD)<sup>2</sup>: Elections to national parliaments and Presidential elections constitute the essential democratic foundation of the European Union.

The OEIC's most concrete proposal for strengthening democracy in Europe is to:

- Strengthen the political power of national parliaments, whose turnouts are the highest, showing the highest levels of voter consent.

Other suggestions that have been presented in the debate are that:

- The member states could organise elections of their representative to the European Commission at the same day in which the European Parliament elections are held. This would make it difficult or even impossible for other EU countries or the European Parliament to reject a country's candidate for the Commission.
- Referendums on European issues could be held at the same time as EP elections. (Issues such as entering the eurozone for instance).
- Local elections and/or referendums could be held at the same time as the European elections. Historical trends prove that this leads to a higher turnout.
- The possibility of prolonging postal voting from three weeks before the Election Day. Voters should have easy access to polling stations close to where they live during this period.

From an EU-federalist point of view, holding elections to national parliaments/referendums and to the EP on the same day could be interpreted as a move to downgrade the European Parliament. But we must ask ourselves the following question: Are there any alternatives?

### **European Parliament elections - the lowest turnouts of nearly all elections**

The EU Treaties (the Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty, the Amsterdam Treaty, the Nice Treaty, the Constitutional Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty) have all given (or been intended to give) the European Parliament more and more political clout and increased co-decision powers with the Council in the EU's legislative process. At the same time, voter turnout has followed a constant downward trend. Some might argue that this downward trend applies to all elections and this is true to a certain extent, but the EP elections are number one when it comes to voter apathy.

The EP elections are one of the largest in the world by reference to the number of eligible voters, following India of course. However, there are voters who are registered in two countries at the same time if they have double citizenship. They then actually count twice. Also voters with a citizenship in one EU country but with residence in another EU country

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<sup>1</sup> Voters could also express their lack of interest by supporting anti-establishment parties in the 2014 European Parliament elections.

<sup>2</sup> [www.eudemocrats.org](http://www.eudemocrats.org)

can register in the country of residence to vote in the EP elections. Double voting of this kind may occur as it not totally controlled.

**Table 1. European Parliament elections 2009. EU 27 electorate plus Croatia (European Parliament election 2013), number of voters, number of rejected votes and number of valid votes**

	Electorate	Electorate in percent of EU total	Number of voters	Number of rejected votes (invalid and blank)	Number of valid votes
<b>BE - Belgium</b>	7 760 436	2.00	7 014 415	442 613	6 571 802
<b>DK – Denmark</b>	4 057 100	1.05	2 415 568	73 440	2 342 128
<b>DE – Germany</b>	62 222 873	16.04	26 923 614	590 170	26 333 444
<b>IE – Ireland</b>	3 258 320	0.84	1 875 920	46 607	1 829 313
<b>FR – France</b>	44 282 823	11.42	17 992 161	773 547	17 218 614
<b>IT – Italy</b>	50 276 247	12.96	32 748 675	2 102 047	30 646 628
<b>LU – Luxembourg</b>	240 673	0.06	218 423	20 059	198 364
<b>NL – Netherlands</b>	12 445 497	3.21	4 573 743	19 879	4 553 864
<b>UK – United Kingdom</b>	45 312 626	11.68	15 723 975	102 471	15 621 504
<b>EL - Greece</b>	9 996 353	2.58	5 261 355	133 818	5 127 537
<b>ES – Spain</b>	35 492 567	9.15	15 935 147	319 851	15 615 296
<b>PT – Portugal</b>	9 704 559	2.50	3 568 943	235 748	3 333 195
<b>SE – Sweden</b>	7 088 303	1.83	3 227 561	59 015	3 168 546
<b>AT – Austria</b>	6 362 761	1.64	2 925 132	60 511	2 864 621
<b>FI – Finland</b>	4 332 457	1.12	1 672 434	7 603	1 664 831
<b>CZ – Czech Republic</b>	8 401 374	2.17	2 371 009	12 075	2 358 934
<b>EE – Estonia</b>	909 628	0.23	399 181	2 199	396 982
<b>CY – Cyprus</b>	526 060	0.14	312 479	6 154	306 325
<b>LT – Lithuania</b>	2 692 397	0.69	564 803	14 786	550 017
<b>LV – Latvia</b>	1 490 923	0.38	793 118	1 521	791 597
<b>HU – Hungary</b>	8 046 086	2.07	2 921 779	25 600	2 896 179
<b>MT – Malta</b>	322 411	0.08	254 039	5 870	248 169
<b>PL – Poland</b>	30 565 272	7.88	7 505 261	140 498	7 364 763
<b>SI – Slovenia</b>	1 699 755	0.44	482 136	18 664	463 472
<b>SK – Slovakia</b>	4 345 773	1.12	853 533	26 751	826 782
<b>BG – Bulgaria</b>	6 684 770	1.72	2 601 677	25 245	2 576 434
<b>RO - Romania</b>	18 197 316	4.69	5 035 299	194 626	4 840 033
<b>EU 27</b>	<b>387 931 840</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>166 163 415</b>	<b>5 461 368</b>	<b>160 703 374</b>
<b>HR - Croatia</b>	<b>3 748 815</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>781 216</b>	<b>39 808</b>	<b>741 408</b>

Source: [Croatian State Election Commission](#)

There is always the question of how accurate electoral registers are in different countries. There are always problems keeping registers up to date in view of the movement of people and the need to remove the names of deceased persons. Croatia is a good example of this.

The Croatian voter list in 2007 included 555,012 ineligible voters. According to the Croatian State Election Commission, the voter list in 2007 totalled 4,402,045 - 4,002,015 votes within Croatia and 400,030 diaspora votes. However, legitimate voters within Croatia numbered 3,447,003 (subtracting 990,457 individuals younger than 18 from the 2001 census figure of 4,437,460 citizens). The discrepancy of 555,012 has never been addressed (4,002,015 voted, with 3,447,003 being legitimate voters within Croatia).

It has been reported<sup>3</sup> that there were more than 917,000 non-existing voters on the voting rolls in Croatia's parliamentary elections held on 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2011. It has been claimed that

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.adriaticinstitute.org/?action=news&id=184> and [http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_9667000/9667372.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9667000/9667372.stm)

there were more than 917,000 non-existing voters on the voter list. Instead of 3,175,000 legitimate voters on the voter list, Croatia's voter list consisted of 4,092,323 voters (for a country of 4,290,612 people). According to the Croatian think-tank, The Adriatic Institute, Croatia's Minister of Administration, Arsen Bauk, admitted<sup>4</sup> in May 2012 that in his country of just 4.2 million people, "over 1 million surplus voters" were on the electoral rolls in the parliamentary elections of December 2011. Croatia's authorities claim that they have purged the rolls of non-existent voters and as can be seen in the Table above there were 300,000 fewer eligible voters in the European Parliament elections of April 2013. Critics however remain unconvinced and question if this clean-up of the electoral rolls has really worked. They point out that the claims of the Croatian authorities have not been verified by independent assessments or by election experts from strong rule-of-law nations<sup>5</sup>. Some critics claim Croatia's voter lists have never been accurate.

### **Comparison of turnouts in different kinds of elections**

In short, a comparison of voter turnout in local, regional and national elections to the European Parliament elections makes it clear that the latter are the least popular elections. Only a tiny number of referendums on very limited political topics in the political history of the 28 Member States of the European Union have recorded lower turnouts than the European Parliament elections. Croatia is no exception to this trend. Note Tables 4, 5, and 6 below which compare turnout in the European Parliament election of April 2013 with other recent elections and with one referendum in Croatia.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.adriaticinstitute.org/?action=TheStateoftheEconomy>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2013/05/17/feature-01](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2013/05/17/feature-01)

**Table 2. Election Comparisons: Turnout in the European Parliament elections in June 2009 in the EU 27 and in Croatia 2013 compared with the closest national parliamentary and presidential elections in the member states (year and month of national elections between brackets) (Percent)**

	EP 2009 (or EP 2013)	Nat. parl. elect	Pres. elect 1st round	Pres. elect 2nd round
<b>BE</b> <sup>6</sup>	90.39	91.31 (2007-06)	-	-
<b>DK</b>	59.5	86.6 (2007-11)	-	-
<b>DE</b>	43.3	70.8 (2009-09)	-	-
<b>IE</b>	57.5	67.0 (2007-05)	- (2004-10) <sup>7</sup>	-
<b>FR</b>	40.63	60.42 (2007-06) <sup>8</sup>	83.77 (2007-05)	83.97 (2007-05)
<b>IT</b>	65.05	80.40/80.51 (2008-04) <sup>9</sup>	-	-
<b>LU</b>	90.76 <sup>10</sup>	88.8 (2009-06)	-	-
<b>NL</b>	36.75	80.35 (2006-11)	-	-
<b>UK</b>	34.5 <sup>11</sup>	61.4 (2005-05)	-	-
<b>EL</b>	52.63	70.92 (2009-10)	-	-
<b>ES</b>	44.9	73.85 (2008-03)	-	-
<b>PT</b>	36.77	59.74 (2009-09)	62.60 (2006-01)	-
<b>SE</b>	45.53	81.99 (2006-09)	-	-
<b>AT</b>	45.97	78.81 (2008-09)	71.60 (2004-04)	-
<b>FI</b> <sup>12</sup>	40.3	67.9 (2007-03)	73.9 (2006-01)	77.2 (2006-01)
<b>CZ</b>	28.22	64.47 & 28.97/42.09/39.52 (2006-06 & 2004-11/2006-10/2008-10) <sup>13</sup>	-	-
<b>EE</b>	43.9	61.91 (2007-03)	-	-
<b>CY</b>	59.40	89.00 (2006-02)	89.62 (2008-02)	90.84 (2008-02)
<b>LT</b>	20.98	48.58 (2008-10) <sup>14</sup>	51.76 (2009-05)	-
<b>LV</b>	53.75	62.23 (2006-10)	-	-
<b>HU</b>	36.31	67.8 (2006-04) <sup>15</sup>	-	-
<b>MT</b>	78.81	93.3 (2008-03)	-	-
<b>PL</b>	24.53	53.88 (2007-10)	49.74 (2005-10)	50.99 (2005-10)
<b>SI</b>	28.37	63.10 (2008-09)	57.67 (2007-10)	58.46 (2007-11)
<b>SK</b>	19.64	54.67 (2006-06)	43.63 (2009-03)	51.67 (2009-04)
<b>BG</b>	38.92	60.95 (2009-07)	44.28 (2006-10)	42.78 (2006-10)
<b>RO</b>	27.67	39.20 (2008-11)	54.4 (2009-11)	58.0 (2009-12)
<b>EU 27 Average</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>69.6</b> <sup>16</sup>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>64.3</b>
<b>HR</b>	20.84	54.32 (2011-12)	43.96 (2009-12)	50.13 (2010-01)

<sup>6</sup> Belgium has compulsory voting.

<sup>7</sup> Ireland – Presidential election 2004-10. Only one person nominated, the incumbent president, who was re-elected without the need to hold an election. In the previous presidential election of 1997-10 the turnout was 48 %.

<sup>8</sup> France - Parliamentary election 2007-06 First round

<sup>9</sup> Italy - Parliamentary election Senate/Chamber of Deputies; turnout in Italy only, Italians abroad not included.

<sup>10</sup> Luxembourg - European Parliament and National Parliament elections on the same day 2009-06, with compulsory voting, but not with the exactly identical registered voters due to the fact that EU Member State citizens living in Luxembourg could opt-in for voting.

<sup>11</sup> United Kingdom - 34,5 % was the turnout based on valid votes cast only. 34.7 % was the turnout based on total votes. However, the turnout in the election to the House of Commons in 2005-05 is based on valid votes only. In order to make a comparison we used the turnout based on valid votes. Sources: House of Commons Library Research Paper 09/53, EP Elections 2009 and 05/33 General Election 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Finland - All election turnouts relate only to citizens living in Finland

<sup>13</sup> Czech Republic - The Chamber of Deputies is elected for a four-year term by proportional representation with a 5 % election threshold. The members of the Senate are elected in single-seat constituencies elected by two-round runoff voting for a six-year term, with one-third renewed every even year in the autumn. The election turnout figures for the Senate elections are for the first round.

<sup>14</sup> Lithuania - National parliamentary election first round

<sup>15</sup> Hungary - National parliamentary election first round

<sup>16</sup> The elections to the Senates in Italy and the Czech Republic are excluded from the average figure for turnout in national parliamentary elections in the EU 27.



Comments:

\* Observe that the turnout of 46.2 % for the entire EU 27 is the average between the states, and not the average of participating voters. The turnout was 42.96 % when 166,163,415 persons voted out of a total EU electorate of 387,931,840 (see Table 1).

\* The presidential elections in the EU member states are of different political importance. The presidential elections in France, Cyprus and Romania are among the most important while in Austria and Ireland the president is essentially a figurehead, with little constitutional power.

### Index - comparison of turnout

When turnout in the European Parliament election is compared using an index calculation - with turnout in the most recent national parliamentary and presidential elections turnout measured at 100 - the difference in electoral mobilization for the European Parliament elections is even clearer to see.

**Table 3. Index of Turnout in the 2009 European election in the EU 27 and in Croatia 2013 compared with national parliamentary and presidential elections in the member states - the two latter elections being indexed at 100) (year and month of national elections being given between brackets).**

	National parliament election	President election 1st round	President election 2nd round
<b>BE</b>	99.0 <sup>17</sup>	-	-
<b>DK</b>	68.7	-	-
<b>DE</b>	61.1 (2009-09)	-	-
<b>IE</b>	85.8 (2007-05)	-(2004-10) <sup>18</sup>	-
<b>FR</b>	67.2 (2007-06) <sup>19</sup>	48.4 (2007-05)	48.3 (2007-05)
<b>IT</b>	81.0/80.9 (2008-04) <sup>20</sup>	-	-
<b>LU</b>	102.3 (2009-06) <sup>21</sup>	-	-
<b>NL</b>	45.8 (2006-11)	-	-
<b>UK</b>	56.2 (2005-05) <sup>22</sup>	-	-
<b>EL</b>	74.2 (2009-10)	-	-
<b>ES</b>	60.8 (2008-03)	-	-
<b>PT</b>	61.6 (2009-09)	58.8 (2006-01)	-
<b>SE</b>	55.5 (2009-09)	-	-
<b>AT</b>	58.4 (2008-09)	64.2 (2004-04)	-
<b>FI</b>	59.4 (2007-03)	54.5 (2006-01)	52.2 (2006-01)
<b>CZ</b>	43.7 & 97.2/67.0/71.4 (2006-06 & 2004-11/2006-10/2008-10) <sup>23</sup>	-	-
<b>EE</b>	70.9 (2007-03)	-	-
<b>CY</b>	66.7 (2006-02)	66.3 (2008-02)	65.4 (2008-02)
<b>LT</b>	43.2 (2008-10) <sup>24</sup>	40.5 (2009-05)	-
<b>LV</b>	86.4 (2006-10)	-	-

<sup>17</sup> Belgium - Compulsory voting.

<sup>18</sup> Ireland - Presidential election 2004-10. Only one person nominated, the incumbent president, who was returned without need of election. In the previous presidential election of 1997-10 the turnout was 48 % - 119.8 compared to EP election turnout 2009-06 in Ireland.

<sup>19</sup> France - Parliamentary election 2007-06, first round.

<sup>20</sup> Italy - Parliamentary election Senate/Chamber of Deputies, turnout in Italy, Italians abroad excluded.

<sup>21</sup> Luxembourg - European Parliamentary and national parliamentary election on the same day 2009-06 with compulsory voting. But not with identically registered voters due to the fact that EU member state citizens living in Luxembourg could opt in for voting.

<sup>22</sup> United Kingdom - The comparison is made on turnout in valid votes only.

<sup>23</sup> Czech Republic - The Chamber of Deputies is elected for a four-year term by proportional representation with a 5 % election threshold. The members of the Senate are elected in single-seat constituencies elected by two-round run-off voting for a six-year term, with one-third renewed every even year in the autumn. The election turnouts for the Senate elections are for the first round.

<sup>24</sup> Lithuania - National parliamentary election, first round.

	National parliament election	President election 1st round	President election 2nd round
<b>HU</b>	53.5 (2006-04) <sup>25</sup>	-	-
<b>MT</b>	84.5 (2008-03)	-	-
<b>PL</b>	45.5 (2007-10)	49.3 (2005-10)	48.0 (2005-10)
<b>SI</b>	45.0 (2008-09)	49.2 (2007-10)	48.5 (2007-11)
<b>SK</b>	35.8 (2006-06)	45.0 (2009-03)	37.9 (2009-04)
<b>BG</b>	63.8 (2009-07)	87.8 (2006-10)	90.9 (2006-10)
<b>RO</b>	70.7 (2008-11)	50.9 (2009-11)	47.8 (2009-12)
<b>EU27 Average</b>	<b>64.7<sup>26</sup></b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>54.9</b>
<b>HR</b>	38.4 (2011-12)	47.4 (2009-12)	41.6 (2010-01)

Comment:

The electorate is of course not the same in European Parliament elections as in national parliamentary elections. Within one year new voters become eligible to cast their ballot, existing voters die or emigrate, some voters may for practical reasons not vote even if they intended to, etc. But there are very few voters that actively choose not to vote in a national parliamentary election but want to vote only in the European Parliament elections.

**Table 4. Comparison: Turnouts in the Croatian elections and referendums 2009-2013. (Percent).**

Year and month	Type of election/referendum	Turnout %
2009-12	Presidential election, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	43.96
2010-01	Presidential election, 2 <sup>nd</sup> round	50.13
2011-12	Parliamentary election	54.32
2012-01	EU membership referendum	43.51
2013-04	European Parliament election	20.84
2013-05	Local elections, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	47.28

As can be seen from the Table above voter turnout in Croatia generally is lower than in many other EU Member states. Nevertheless the turnout in the election to the European Parliament hit a record low, although not the worst turnout in the EU as Slovakia had lower turnouts in 2004 and 2009.

**Table 5. Index of Comparison: Turnout in the 2013 Croatian European Parliament election compared with the other elections and the EU referendum in Croatia 2009-2013 (the EP election election index being 100)**

Year and month	Type of election/referendum	Turnout (index)
2009-12	President election, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	210.9
2010-01	President election, 2 <sup>nd</sup> round	240.5
2011-12	Parliament election	260.7
2012-01	EU membership referendum	208.8
2013-04	European Parliament election	100
2013-05	Local elections, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	226.9

<sup>25</sup> Hungary - National parliamentary election, first round.

<sup>26</sup> The Senate elections in Italy and the Czech Republic are excluded from the average figure for turnout in national parliamentary elections in the EU 27.

Elections to national parliaments are the most popular elections when it comes to turnout, just as in virtually every other EU Member State, with the exception of the hal-dozen or so countries where the election of a powerful State President is regarded as more important. This is not surprising because political debates in the Member States are focused on the actions and policies of the respective national governments, or in some cases the State President.

**Table 6. "The Gap" – Turnout (%) in the 2013 Croatian European Parliament election compared with other elections and the EU referendum in Croatia 2009-2013 (the first mentioned election index 100)**

Year and month	Type of election/referendum	Turnout (+/- compared to EU Parliament election 2013)
2013-04	European Parliament election	20.84
2009-12	Presidential election, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	+ 23.12 %
2010-01	Presidential election, 2 <sup>nd</sup> round	+ 29.29 %
2011-12	Parliamentary election	+ 33.48 %
2012-01	EU membership referendum	+ 22.67 %
2013-05	Local elections, 1 <sup>st</sup> round	+ 26.44 %

### **Croatian political parties and party lists in the European Parliament election 2013:**

#### Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP) and allies (SDP–HNS–HSU)

SDP, Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats (Social Liberal) (HNS), and Croatian Party of Pensioners (Pensioners' interests) (HSU).

#### Croatian Democratic Union and allies (HDZ–HSP AS–BUZ)

HDZ (centre-right), Croatian Party of Right Ante Starčević (Nationalist) (HSP AS), and Bloc Pensioners Together (BUZ).

#### Croatian Labourists – Labour Party (HL) (Left wing)

#### Croatian Peasant Party and Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSS-HSLS)

HSS (Agrarians, Christian Democrats) and HSLS (Conservative Liberals)

#### Croatian Growth - Movement for a Successful Croatia (Hrast) (Centre-right, National Conservative)

#### Voters' group - Ivan Jakovčić

Kandidacijska Lista Grupe Birača (Istria Regionalist).

#### Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja and allies (HDSSB-HDSSD-ZH)

HDSSB (Right wing, Regionalist), Croatian Democratic Union Free Dalmatia (HDSSD) (Regionalist), Greens Croatia (ZH).

**Table 7. The result in the European Parliament election 2013 in whole of Croatia**

	Number of eligible voters	3,748,815	
	Voted	781,216	20.84 %
	Voters which voted by ballot	780,980	20.83 %
	Number of valid ballots	741,408	94.93 %
	Number of invalid ballots	39,572	5.07 %
	<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	HRVATSKA DEMOKRATSKA ZAJEDNICA - HDZ HRVATSKA STRANKA PRAVA DR. ANTE STARČEVIĆ - HSP AS BLOK UMIROVLJENICI ZAJEDNO - BUZ	243,654	32.86 %
2.	SOCIJALDEMOKRATSKA PARTIJA HRVATSKE - SDP HRVATSKA NARODNA STRANKA - LIBERALNI DEMOKRATI - HNS HRVATSKA STRANKA UMIROVLJENIKA - HSU	237,778	32.07 %
3.	HRVATSKI LABURISTI - STRANKA RADA	42,750	5.77 %
4.	HRVATSKA SELJAČKA STRANKA - HSS HRVATSKA SOCIJALNO-LIBERALNA STRANKA - HSLŠ	28,646	3.86 %
5.	KANDIDACIJSKA LISTA GRUPE BIRAČA Nositelj liste: IVAN JAKOVČIĆ	28,445	3.84 %
6.	HRVATSKI DEMOKRATSKI SAVEZ SLAVONIJE I BARANJE - HDSSB HRVATSKI DEMOKRATSKI SLOBODARSKI SAVEZ DALMACIJE - HDSSD ZELENI HRVATSKE - ZELENI HR	22,328	3.01 %
7.	HRAST - POKRET ZA USPJEŠNU HRVATSKU	18,893	2.55 %
8.	AKCIJA MLADIH - AM	11,068	1.49 %
9.	STRANKA UMIROVLJENIKA - SU	10,947	1.48 %
10.	HRVATSKA STRANKA PRAVA - HSP	10,317	1.39 %
11.	ZELENI ZAJEDNO	8,599	1.16 %
12.	PIRATSKA STRANKA - PS	8,345	1.13 %
13.	AUTOHTONA - HRVATSKA SELJAČKA STRANKA - A-HSS	6,785	0.92 %
14.	AKCIJA SOCIJALDEMOKRATA HRVATSKE - ASH DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA ŽENA - DSŽ SAVEZ ZA PROMJENE - SP STRANKA UMIROVLJENIKA HRVATSKE - BLOK UMIROVLJENICI ZAJEDNO - SUH	6,391	0.86 %
15.	DEMOKRATSKI CENTAR - DC	5,413	0.73 %
16.	HRVATSKA ČISTA STRANKA PRAVA - HČSP	5,238	0.71 %
17.	GLAS RAZUMA MEĐIMURSKA STRANKA - MS	4,939	0.67 %
18.	ABECEDA DEMOKRACIJE - ABECEDA	4,878	0.66 %
19.	AKCIJA ZA BOLJU HRVATSKU - ABH JEDINO HRVATSKA - POKRET ZA HRVATSKU - JEDINO HRVATSKA	4,531	0.61 %
20.	OBITELJSKA STRANKA - OS	4,391	0.59 %

21.	HRVATSKA RADNIČKA STRANKA - HRS	3,946	0.53 %
22.	NAŠA STRANKA - NS NOVA SRPSKA STRANKA - NSS	3,933	0.53 %
23.	POKRET ZA MODERNU HRVATSKU	3,885	0.52 %
24.	AGENDA MLADIH DEMOKRATA - AMD	3,667	0.49 %
25.	NEZAVISNI SELJACI HRVATSKE - NSH	3,646	0.49 %
26.	SOCIJALISTIČKA RADNIČKA PARTIJA HRVATSKE - SRP	3,538	0.48 %
27.	AUTOHTONA - HRVATSKA STRANKA PRAVA - A-HSP	2,350	0.32 %
28.	ZAGREBAČKA NEZAVISNA LISTA - ZNL	2,107	0.28 %

### Personal votes of elected MEP's

The personal preference votes within the three lists which obtained representation had one interesting result. The HSP AS-representative on the HDZ list received a good result. To accept HSP AS into the election coalition of HDZ might have been controversial for the other members of the European Christian Democratic Party (EPP), but such opposition was not voiced. HSP AS is considered to be politically far-right or even extremist, and Ms Tomasic has been accused by political opponents of having made xenophobic statements and hate speeches. HDZ and HSP AS will most likely not cooperate in the 2014 European Parliament elections.

**Table 8. The distribution of personal votes at the three lists which got the most votes**

HRVATSKA DEMOKRATSKA ZAJEDNICA - HDZ HRVATSKA STRANKA PRAVA DR.ANTE STARČEVIĆ - HSP AS BLOK UMIROVLJENICI ZAJEDNO - BUZ		NUMBER OF VOTES	%	243.654	32.86
1.	DUBRAVKA ŠUICA - <i>elected</i>	31,483	12.92%		
2.	ANDREJ PLENKOVIĆ - <i>elected</i>	37,546	15.41%		
3.	DAVOR IVO STIER - <i>elected</i>	14,005	5.75%		
4.	IVANA MALETIĆ - <i>elected</i>	4,454	1.83%		
5.	ZDRAVKA BUŠIĆ - <i>elected</i>	4,102	1.68%		
6.	RUŽA TOMAŠIĆ - <i>elected</i>	64,758	26.58%		
7.	ŽELJANA ZOVKO	2,839	1.17%		
8.	KRISTIЈAN TUŠEK	4,650	1.91%		
9.	KRŠEVAN ANTUN DUJMOVIĆ	1,803	0.74%		
10.	IVAN BUBIĆ	1,302	0.53%		
11.	ZDRAVKO KRMEK	6,582	2.70%		
12.	MILIVOJ ŠPIKA	2,592	1.06%		

SOCIJALDEMOKRATSKA PARTIJA HRVATSKE - SDP HRVATSKA NARODNA STRANKA - LIBERALNI DEMOKRATI - HNS HRVATSKA STRANKA UMIROVLJENIKA - HSU		NUMBER OF VOTES	%	237.778	32.07 %
1.	TONINO PICULA - <i>elected</i>	112,559	47.34%		
2.	BILJANA BORZAN - <i>elected</i>	17,831	7.50%		
3.	MARINO BALDINI - <i>elected</i>	1,645	0.69%		
4.	OLEG VALJALO - <i>elected</i>	1,359	0.57%		
5.	SANDRA PETROVIĆ JAKOVINA - <i>elected</i>	3,853	1.62%		
6.	JOZO RADOŠ	16,263	6.84%		
7.	MARIJA ILIĆ	7,269	3.06%		
8.	SABINA GLASOVAC	1,825	0.77%		
9.	VEDRANA GUJIĆ	1,958	0.82%		
10.	IVICA LUKANOVIĆ	2,523	1.06%		
11.	MELITA MULIĆ	984	0.41%		
12.	SNJEŽANA ŠPANJOL	2,428	1.02%		
HRVATSKI LABURISTI - STRANKA RADA		NUMBER OF VOTES	%	42.750	5.77 %
1.	NIKOLA VULJANIĆ - <i>elected</i>	6,414	15.00%		
2.	dr.sc. MARITA BRČIĆ KULJIŠ	3,180	7.44%		
3.	STIPE DRMIĆ	1,095	2.56%		
4.	DINA DOMIJAN	1,219	2.85%		
5.	prof.dr.sc. DAMIR HRŠAK	3,714	8.69%		
6.	DRAGO ČULINA	2,740	6.41%		
7.	ĐULIJANO GRUM	364	0.85%		
8.	SILVIJA DOLOŠIĆ	868	2.03%		
9.	WILLIAM NEGRI	488	1.14%		
10.	mr.sc. ZDENKA BREBRIĆ	910	2.13%		
11.	mr.sc. MARIJA SCHUBERT	1,321	3.09%		
12.	mr.sc. ALJANA KOVAČIĆ	1,352	3.16%		

## Zagreb

The capital of Croatia and also the largest city of the country.

**Table 9. Croatia: European Parliament elections 2013. Polling stations (Biračka mjesta) in Zagreb with the highest and lowest turnouts and the percentages of the parties in these polling stations**

Polling station no	Turnout	SDP, HNS, HSU	HDZ, HSP AS, BUZ	Laburisti, Str Rada	Hrast
The whole of Zagreb	22.46	37.17	30.58	6.66	3.79
277	<b>48.47</b>	<b>40.72</b>	29.92	4.43	3.05
595	<b>44.64</b>	<b>56.00</b>	<b>36.00</b>	0	0
391	<b>43.31</b>	22.64	26.42	5.66	3.77
555	<b>38.89</b>	21.21	9.09	6.06	1.52
97	<b>36.86</b>	<b>45.31</b>	27.51	5.18	2.59
22	<b>36.25</b>	<b>44.90</b>	<b>31.43</b>	5.31	0.82
108	<b>35.58</b>	<b>42.26</b>	<b>36.45</b>	3.23	1.94
61	<b>35.07</b>	<b>37.28</b>	<b>37.72</b>	2.19	2.63
9	<b>34.85</b>	<b>44.66</b>	27.15	3.85	2.45
67	<b>34.62</b>	<b>59.39</b>	16.16	5.24	1.75
317	<b>34.22</b>	<b>50.49</b>	22.80	<b>7.82</b>	2.28
124	<b>33.80</b>	<b>42.86</b>	24.80	<b>7.28</b>	3.23
42	<b>33.73</b>	31.82	<b>33.64</b>	5.00	<b>5.91</b>
125	<b>33.65</b>	<b>40.95</b>	30.53	6.40	2.38
533	<b>33.61</b>	<b>66.67</b>	5.13	2.56	2.56
91	<b>33.60</b>	<b>51.52</b>	22.76	4.07	0.81
189	<b>33.40</b>	<b>46.87</b>	25.37	<b>7.76</b>	0.90
328	<b>33.33</b>	<b>59.70</b>	19.40	3.36	0
335	<b>33.29</b>	<b>45.70</b>	26.56	6.64	2.73
25	<b>33.26</b>	<b>51.40</b>	18.18	5.24	3.50
599	<b>33.21</b>	23.75	<b>42.50</b>	6.25	0
73	<b>33.17</b>	<b>47.55</b>	25.32	<b>6.72</b>	2.07
161	12.06	25.35	<b>42.25</b>	4.93	2.11
251	11.99	26.44	<b>40.38</b>	<b>7.21</b>	<b>4.81</b>
393	11.92	27.21	<b>33.33</b>	<b>10.88</b>	2.72
230	11.83	28.40	<b>30.77</b>	<b>7.10</b>	3.55
252	11.81	25.27	<b>41.94</b>	3.76	<b>5.38</b>
592	11.56	25.00	<b>41.00</b>	5.50	3.50
254	11.13	18.07	<b>49.40</b>	<b>10.84</b>	<b>4.22</b>
567	11.07	33.33	27.45	<b>17.65</b>	<b>3.92</b>
560	10.98	24.59	22.95	<b>8.20</b>	<b>6.56</b>
159	10.94	26.72	<b>53.44</b>	3.82	1.53
443	10.85	22.43	<b>35.98</b>	<b>7.48</b>	<b>7.01</b>
410	10.72	15.13	<b>67.11</b>	2.63	1.97
253	10.52	22.88	<b>40.52</b>	4.58	<b>7.84</b>
175	10.30	26.27	<b>46.61</b>	<b>6.78</b>	1.69
160	10.09	28.87	<b>35.05</b>	<b>8.25</b>	0
151	9.93	22.38	<b>38.36</b>	3.50	<b>12.59</b>
404	9.79	36.00	<b>33.60</b>	1.60	<b>4.00</b>
153	9.77	27.27	<b>34.55</b>	6.36	2.73
447	9.50	27.78	<b>32.41</b>	<b>16.67</b>	<b>4.63</b>
503	9.09	<b>37.50</b>	6.25	<b>18.75</b>	0
543	7.88	27.78	<b>33.33</b>	0	0
154	5.92	<b>39.60</b>	24.75	3.96	<b>4.95</b>

Comment : The lowest turnouts in the city are in areas with a bad socio-economic situation and with a high percentage of the Roma minority living there.

## Split

The second-largest city in Croatia.

**Table 10. Croatia: European Parliament elections 2013. Polling stations (Biračka mjesta) in Split with the highest and lowest turnouts and the percentages of the parties in these polling stations**

Polling station no	Turnout	SDP, HNS, HSU	HDZ, HSP AS, BUZ	Laburisti, Str Rada	Hrast
The whole of Split	18.44	40.67	31.04	3.89	4.30
154	<b>32.28</b>	5.41	<b>59.46</b>	0	<b>10.81</b>
152	<b>30.47</b>	7.46	<b>80.60</b>	0	1.49
107	<b>28.25</b>	<b>54.47</b>	27.66	0.85	<b>5.96</b>
105	<b>27.28</b>	<b>42.97</b>	26.91	<b>4.02</b>	4.02
106	<b>26.68</b>	<b>63.93</b>	19.18	2.74	2.74
97	<b>26.41</b>	<b>55.95</b>	18.25	<b>4.76</b>	1.98
68	<b>26.38</b>	<b>50.00</b>	24.74	3.61	3.09
7	<b>26.02</b>	<b>59.30</b>	13.95	<b>4.26</b>	2.71
153	<b>25.70</b>	25.00	<b>38.64</b>	<b>4.55</b>	0
54	<b>25.17</b>	39.68	<b>39.68</b>	3.24	2.02
---					
139	12.12	19.14	<b>55.02</b>	1.44	<b>4.31</b>
150	12.11	23.79	<b>37.38</b>	2.43	<b>7.77</b>
43	11.95	22.83	<b>48.82</b>	0.79	<b>5.51</b>
138	11.95	20.00	<b>50.71</b>	2.14	<b>5.00</b>
143	11.87	12.96	<b>56.48</b>	1.85	<b>6.48</b>
145	11.48	14.78	<b>60.87</b>	0.87	<b>7.83</b>
114	11.24	27.52	<b>43.12</b>	2.75	<b>5.50</b>
147	10.44	26.21	<b>43.45</b>	<b>6.21</b>	0.69
149	9.22	9.26	<b>65.74</b>	0.93	0.93
144	8.36	10.26	<b>43.56</b>	<b>5.13</b>	<b>12.82</b>

Comment: In general the polling stations have somewhere between 700 and 1,800 registered voters. Polling stations 152, 153 and 154 are exceptions in that they only between 127 and 233 registered voters.



## Rijeka

The third largest city in Croatia. The city is a stronghold for the SDP.

**Table 11. Croatia: European Parliament elections 2013. Polling stations (Biračka mjesta) in Rijeka with the highest and lowest turnouts and the percentages of the parties in these polling stations**

Polling station no	Turnout	SDP, HNS, HSU	HDZ, HSP AS, BUZ	Laburisti, Str Rada	Kand List grp Biraca
The whole of Rijeka	19.69	48.95	19.02	5.68	7.14
2	<b>37.39</b>	<b>54.86</b>	14.78	<b>5.87</b>	5.47
83	<b>30.61</b>	<b>51.87</b>	<b>20.15</b>	<b>6.34</b>	6.72
93	<b>29.19</b>	<b>50.56</b>	18.08	5.65	4.80
94	<b>26.86</b>	<b>54.43</b>	18.04	<b>6.12</b>	5.81
82	<b>26.29</b>	<b>65.57</b>	9.02	4.10	4.92
75	<b>26.01</b>	46.24	<b>22.04</b>	4.30	<b>9.68</b>
26	<b>25.68</b>	<b>53.44</b>	11.80	<b>6.89</b>	6.56
85	<b>25.10</b>	<b>54.42</b>	16.96	4.95	5.30
23	<b>25.05</b>	<b>50.91</b>	18.64	3.18	<b>8.18</b>
87	<b>24.87</b>	<b>51.47</b>	13.24	5.15	<b>7.35</b>
---					
37	15.06	<b>59.56</b>	14.21	3.83	3.28
100	15.04	33.71	<b>27.53</b>	3.93	<b>8.99</b>
18	14.39	36.50	<b>42.00</b>	1.50	<b>7.50</b>
54	14.18	43.33	18.33	<b>9.44</b>	<b>10.00</b>
42	13.69	38.18	<b>26.06</b>	3.64	<b>8.48</b>
19	13.21	48.63	<b>24.04</b>	5.46	4.37
8	12.42	41.92	<b>26.35</b>	<b>5.99</b>	<b>7.19</b>
9	12.30	36.69	<b>34.32</b>	4.73	<b>9.47</b>
10	10.88	34.97	<b>25.57</b>	5.59	<b>15.38</b>
21	8.95	48.39	<b>26.61</b>	4.03	4.84

Comment: For Rijeka it was possible to study the local result for the national parliamentary election in 2007. This was an election which the HDZ won nationally, but in Rijeka the SDP got almost the same percentage result as above in 2013. At the ten polling stations in Rijeka which had the highest turnouts in 2007 the SDP was stronger than average for the whole city at eight, and the HDZ in only two of them. At the ten polling stations with the lowest turnouts in Rijeka the HDZ was stronger than average for the whole city at seven of them, and the SDP at four. So the pattern was almost the same in 2007 as in 2013.

## Osijek

The fourth largest city in Croatia. The regionalist coalition of HDSSB, HDSSD, and Zeleni HR had a good result here since it is the home region of the HDSSB.

**Table 12. Croatia: European Parliament elections 2013. Polling stations (Biračka mjesta) in Osijek with the highest and lowest turnouts and the percentages of the parties in these polling stations**

Polling station no	Turnout	SDP, HNS, HSU	HDZ, HSP AS, BUZ	Laburisti, Str Rada	HDSSB, HDSSD, Zeleni HR
The whole of Osijek	19.95	30.54	20.99	5.39	21.96
58	<b>31.83</b>	<b>40.00</b>	15.85	4.53	17.36
35	<b>30.44</b>	30.17	13.97	4.47	21.79
41	<b>28.28</b>	<b>33.68</b>	17.89	4.21	21.05
15	<b>27.85</b>	<b>33.50</b>	13.79	<b>5.91</b>	21.18
54	<b>27.12</b>	<b>42.52</b>	16.67	3.40	18.71
56	<b>26.73</b>	<b>33.33</b>	14.67	<b>6.67</b>	16.67
23	<b>26.54</b>	<b>33.48</b>	20.54	3.13	<b>22.32</b>
83	<b>26.38</b>	<b>34.18</b>	18.99	4.43	20.25
18	<b>25.76</b>	<b>38.03</b>	10.56	<b>6.34</b>	20.42
45	<b>25.74</b>	<b>39.53</b>	12.25	<b>6.72</b>	20.95
---					
13	13.29	<b>35.29</b>	<b>29.41</b>	<b>5.88</b>	8.24
103	13.11	27.36	<b>33.49</b>	2.36	16.51
108	12.79	<b>42.11</b>	0	0	<b>26.32</b>
104	12.74	20.00	<b>24.74</b>	5.26	<b>24.74</b>
38	12.16	14.42	<b>24.04</b>	<b>8.65</b>	<b>40.38</b>
88	12.06	25.25	<b>33.33</b>	<b>7.07</b>	17.17
99	11.91	22.22	<b>29.86</b>	<b>9.72</b>	<b>22.22</b>
107	11.64	29.23	19.23	3.08	19.23
105	10.69	16.79	<b>29.77</b>	1.53	<b>28.24</b>
106	7.79	<b>36.47</b>	17.65	2.35	21.18

Comment: The polling stations in Tenja had the lowest turnouts in Osijek. This is an area affected by the war of the 1990's and a mostly elderly people remain there.

### Comments, comparison and conclusions

In our second report on the EP elections 2009 we analysed the party political connections between those residential areas with high turnout and those with low turnout. In general right across Europe there are higher turnouts in richer residential areas where the population in general tends to be well educated and have incomes above average. Residential areas with lower levels of education and lower incomes have lower rates of participation. In Western Europe in particular, and in the EU member states where more than 60 percent of the aggregate EU electorate lives, the majority of the voters in high turnout areas tend to vote for centre-right parties while low turnout areas tend to vote for centre-left parties.

For comparative purposes we describe the current trends in different EU countries below. For further information on electoral trends we recommend reading Part II of our election reports at [www.ooiceurope.com](http://www.ooiceurope.com) under “publications”.

There are strong similarities between the EU member states in spite of rather different political history and traditions. Of course there are more similarities between the old members of the EU on one hand and those that joined after 2004 on the other, with the exception of Cyprus and Malta.

**EU member states with strong right-wing parties in higher turnout districts/ward/parts of cities and strong left-wing parties in lower turnout districts/ward/parts of cities**

United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany and Austria.

In total these eleven member states accounted for around 60.5 % of the voters in the 2009 EP elections.

**EU member states with some correlation between right-wing parties doing well in higher turnout districts/ward/parts of cities and some correlation between left-wing parties doing well in lower turnout districts/ward/parts of cities**

Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In total these two member states accounted for around 3.3 % of the voters in the 2009 EP elections.

**EU member states with some elements of correlation between right-wing parties doing well in higher turnout districts/ward/parts of cities and some elements of correlation between left-wing parties doing well in lower turnout districts/ward/parts of cities**

Lithuania and Slovenia.

In total these two member states accounted for around 1.1 % of the voters in the 2009 EP elections.

**EU member states with no correlation between right-wing parties doing well in higher turnout districts/ward/parts of cities and no correlation to left-wing parties doing well in lower turnout districts/ward/parts of cities**

Italy, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

In total these six member states accounted for around 29.5 % of the voters in the 2009 EP elections.

**EU member states where a connection was not possible to research due to compulsory voting, or where other elections being held on the same day as the EP election distorted the turnout figures, or the absence of such figures**

Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, Cyprus, Greece and Latvia.

In total these six member states accounted for around 5.2 % of the voters in the 2009 EP elections.

As one can see, Croatia does not fit into any of the above categories due to its connection between good scores for a centre-left political party (SDP) in high-turnout residential areas and good scores for a centre-right party (HDZ) in low-turnout residential areas.

There are more dissatisfied voters in poor areas than in more wealthy areas, which of course is logical. Poorer areas also have a lower turnout. But those that do go to the polling stations

tend to vote for parties which are seen to be outside the mainstream political establishment. That does not necessarily mean that these voters vote for Neo-Nazi or xenophobic parties, for there are also other parties among the outsiders, such as extreme-left parties, Pirate parties, animal rights parties etc.

In using the term “populist parties” below we are not referring to populists such as the People’s Party in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century United States, but rather to political parties which are characterised by non-ideological appeals to and for “the people” as against the local political establishment. Populist parties and clearly defined extremist and neo-fascist parties are strong in low-turnout areas in a number of EU countries. This is not a homogenous group of parties. They differ quite a lot depending on national history and tradition. Not all of the EU 28 countries have such extremist parties, at least not significant ones. The election results for extremist parties can also vary a lot. The British National Party for example had a good result in the 2009 European Parliament election but their result in the national parliamentary election 2010 was weak and in the local elections in the same year they lost heavily.

**EU member states where populist and extremist and xenophobic parties generally have a good result in districts/ward/parts of cities with low turnouts**

United Kingdom, Germany, France, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Hungary and Romania.

In total these nine member states had 52.9 % of the voters in the 2009 EP elections.

It is a matter of debate whether Croatia should be included in this group because the good scores for HDZ in residential areas with low turnout came about because the HSP AS representative on the HDZ list received a good personal vote.

Those EU member states which became parliamentary democracies around 1990 show a different pattern from the countries that belonged to what was once referred to as “Western Europe”. The political parties which were established in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe have fewer members as a percentage of the population than member states which have longer democratic traditions. In many cases parties to the left in the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe states emerged out of the old communist parties. The old communist nomenclatura became Social Democrats (with the exception of the Czech Republic where the Social Democrats refounded their historical party and succeeded in surviving in the first two state elections in that country). The old nomenclatura also spread to parties on the right of the political spectrum. Those voters which lost out economically during the transition period of these societies might well hold the opinion that politicians on left and right alike were only concerned for themselves and not for the people who elect them. In some of these countries examples of politicians personally enriching themselves because of their positions and institutional corruption on the part of political parties of the right and left have not encouraged popular confidence in parliamentary democracy.

Such considerations clearly affected voter turnout, as did the fact that in these new democracies the tendency, well established in Western Europe, that more wealthy groups in society lean to the right and poorer groups lean to the left is less relevant as an influence on voting behaviour.