

= Elections in Croatia =

Regular elections in Croatia are mandated by the Constitution and legislation enacted by Parliament . The presidency , Parliament , county prefects and assemblies , city and town mayors , and city and municipal councils are all elective offices . Since 1990 , five presidential elections have been held . During the same period , eight parliamentary elections (including two for the upper house when the parliament was bicameral) were also held . In addition , there were six nationwide local elections . Croatia has held two elections (in 2013 and 2014) to elect 11 members (12 in 2013) of the European Parliament following its accession to the EU on 1 July 2013 .

The President of Croatia is elected to a five @-@ year term by a direct vote of all citizens in a two @-@ round system , requiring runoff elections if no candidate wins more than 50 percent of votes in the first round . Members of Parliament are elected to a four @-@ year term in ten multi @-@ seat constituencies , with additional members elected in special constituencies reserved for the Croatian diaspora and national minorities . As of November 2011 , legislation provides for the election of 151 members of the unicameral parliament . Out of 25 political parties which won seats in Croatian parliamentary elections held since 1990 , only five have won ten seats or more in any one parliamentary election . Those were the Croatian Democratic Union , the Croatian Peasant Party , the Croatian People 's Party ? Liberal Democrats , the Croatian Social Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party of Croatia . The county prefects , city and town mayors are elected to four @-@ year terms by a majority of votes cast within applicable local government units , with a runoff election if no candidate achieves a majority in the first round of voting . Members of county , city and town councils are elected to four @-@ year terms through proportional representation , with the entire local government unit as a single constituency .

Any Croatian citizen over age 18 may be a candidate in presidential , parliamentary or local government elections , provided that a sufficient number of endorsements by Croatian voters is obtained beforehand . Croatian elections are relatively well @-@ regulated ; regulations include spending limits , annual donation limits , a limitation on the number of endorsed candidates and election lists and regulations governing media coverage . Voting takes place in polling stations in Croatia and abroad , monitored by an electoral board and observers at each station . Ballots consist of an alphabetical list of candidates , or an election list with ordinal numbers (which are circled to indicate a vote) . All votes are counted by hand . The State Electoral Commission publishes official results and handles complaints , supported by county , city and town electoral commissions during local elections . Decisions of the electoral commissions may be appealed at the Constitutional Court of Croatia .

= = Parliamentary elections = =

The Parliament of Croatia (Croatian : Hrvatski Sabor) consists of 151 members elected to four @-@ year terms in twelve constituencies . Out of that number , 140 are elected in ten multi @-@ seat territorial constituencies . These are defined on the basis of the existing county borders , with necessary amendments to achieve a uniform number of eligible voters in each constituency (plus or minus five percent) . The eleventh constituency is for citizens of Croatia living abroad ; the number of seats held by this constituency was fixed at three for the parliamentary election held in December 2011 . The 2010 constitutional amendments abolished the former scheme , in which the number of MPs elected from the eleventh constituency was proportional to the ratio to the number of ballots cast in the other ten constituencies . In the 2007 general election , this method led to the eleventh constituency electing five MPs .

An additional eight members of the parliament are elected from the twelfth constituency . It encompasses the entire country ; candidates in this constituency are elected by voters belonging to 22 recognized minorities in Croatia : the Serb minority elects three MPs , the Hungarians and Italians elect one MP each , the Czech and Slovak minorities jointly elect one MP , and all other minorities elect the final two MPs . The nationality of the voters is listed in the voter registry , which is provided by the registrar 's office that maintains Croatia 's vital records . Voter nationalities are

normally officially declared by the parents at birth , but any citizen may declare or change that information later on at the registrar 's office at least 14 days ahead of elections (not at the polling station) . The voter 's nationality need not be declared or may be declared as unknown . During elections , voters who have officially declared they belong to one of the recognized minorities in Croatia may choose to vote for either a territorially applicable list or a corresponding national minority list ; a voter of unknown or non @-@ declared nationality may vote for either a territorially applicable list or any minority list ; a voter who has declared a nationality other than Croat or a recognized minority may vote only for a territorially applicable list (the same as someone who has declared themselves a Croat) .

The standard d'Hondt formula is applied to the vote , with a five @-@ percent election threshold . Since 2015 , the parliamentary elections have an element of preferential voting exists by letting voters choose not only for a list of candidates , but also a single member of the same list . If the percentage of votes for a candidate exceeds 10 % , they are elected as if it was an open list system . The list ranking is maintained for those candidates that do not meet this quota . The last two parliamentary elections elected a total of 151 MPs . An election silence is enforced on the day before and the day of the elections , ending at 7 : 00 pm when the polling stations close and the exit polls are published . Although political parties fund their campaigns using donations or their own assets , the government reimburses them for each parliamentary seat won . For instance , each seat won in the 2011 parliamentary election brought a party 180 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 24 @,@ 300 euros) . Smaller sums were paid to parties or candidates failing to win any parliamentary seats , provided that they received more than five percent of the votes cast in a constituency .

= = = 2015 parliamentary election = = =

= = = Next parliamentary election = = =

As the 8th Assembly of Parliament first constituted on 28 December 2015 the next elections for the Croatian Parliament were originally ment to be held no later than 26 February 2020 . However , after the fall of Tihomir Orešković 's government on 16 June 2016 , a proposal for the dissolution of parliament put forward by the parliamentary opposition gained the support of a majority of the Members of Parliament . A vote on the issue was held on 20 June 2016 , being approved by a majority of 137 votes and officially took effect on 15 July 2016 , while the early election to elect the members of the 9th Assembly will be held on 11 September 2016

= = = Previous parliamentary elections = = =

Since 1990 , nine parliamentary elections have been held in Croatia . These have included the 1990 elections for a tricameral parliament , three elections of the Chamber of Deputies during the bicameral parliament 's existence , three elections of the unicameral Parliament and two elections of the Chamber of Counties ? the upper house of the bicameral parliament .

The elections held in 1990 were the first multi @-@ party elections after 45 years of Communist rule ; candidates vied for all 80 seats in the Social @-@ Political Council of Croatia , all 116 seats in the Municipalities Council of Croatia and all 160 seats in the Associated Labour Council of Croatia (since Parliament had three chambers at the time) . The first round of the election saw a turnout of 85 @.@ 5 percent , and the runoff @-@ election turnout was 74 @.@ 8 percent . The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won 205 seats , and the Social Democratic Party of Croatia won 107 .

= = = Previous Chamber of Deputies and unicameral Sabor elections = = =

Eight parliamentary elections have been held since for the Chamber of Deputies (Croatian : Zastupnički dom) or the unicameral parliament since then ? in 1992 , 1995 , 2000 , 2003 , 2007 , 2011 , 2015 and 2016 . Beginning with the 1992 elections , the number of seats in the Chamber of

Deputies (and , later , in the unicameral parliament) was significantly changed ? ranging from 127 in 1995 to 153 in 2007 and 151 in 2011 . In the Croatian parliamentary elections held since 1992 , when the number of seats in parliament was limited below 160 , only five parties have won ten seats or more in any single election : the HDZ , the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) , the Croatian People 's Party ? Liberal Democrats (HNS) , the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLS) and the SDP .

Several other political parties (besides the HDZ , HSS , HNS , HSLS and SDP) have won parliamentary seats since the 1990 election . Those are (in alphabetical order) : the Alliance of Primorje @-@ Gorski Kotar (previously known as the Rijeka Democratic Alliance) , the Croatian Christian Democratic Union , the Croatian Citizen Party , the Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja , the Croatian Democratic Peasant Party , the Croatian Independent Democrats , the Croatian Party of Pensioners , the Croatian Party of Rights , the Croatian Party of Rights dr . Ante Star?evi? , Dalmatian Action , the Democratic Centre , the Istrian Democratic Assembly , the Liberal Party , the Party of Liberal Democrats , the Serb Democratic Party , the Slavonia @-@ Baranja Croatian Party and the Social Democratic Action of Croatia . The following parties have won the special seats reserved for national minority representatives (also in alphabetical order) : the Bosnian Democratic Party of Croatia , the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Croatia , the German People 's Union ? National Association of Danube Swabians in Croatia , the Independent Democratic Serb Party , the Party of Democratic Action of Croatia and the Serb People 's Party . In addition , numerous independents have won seats through party lists , and Ivan Grubi?i? 's nonpartisan list won seats as a territorial election list . Since the parliamentary seats won belong to individuals , not parties , there have been instances where members have become independent or switched to another political party .

= = = = Chamber of Counties elections = = = =

Under the Constitution of Croatia adopted in 1990 , the Croatian Parliament became bicameral . The Chamber of Deputies had been elected a few months earlier , and its members enacted legislation creating a new territorial organisation of Croatia . This included 21 counties that were to be represented by the new Chamber of Counties (Croatian : ?upanijski dom) . The first election of members to the chamber was held on 7 February 1993 , with each county acting as a multi @-@ seat constituency ; three MPs were elected in each county on the basis of proportional representation . In addition , the President of Croatia appointed up to 5 more members of the Chamber of the Counties to complete its 68 @-@ strong membership . The second election for the Chamber of Counties was held on 13 April 1997 . The Chamber of Deputies was abolished by a constitutional amendment in 2001 .

= = Presidential elections = =

The President of Croatia (officially the President of the Republic , Croatian : Predsjednik Republike) is elected to a five @-@ year term by a direct vote of all citizens , with a majority vote required to win . A runoff election is held if no candidate secures a majority in the first round . The presidential elections are regulated by the constitution and dedicated legislation ; however , the latter only defines technical details , appeals and similar issues . Any citizen of Croatia , 18 or older , may be a candidate in a presidential election if the candidate is endorsed by 10 @,@ 000 voters . The endorsements are required in the form of a list containing name , address , personal identification number and voter signature . The presidential elections are regulated by an act of parliament . Election silence is in force on the day of the elections and the previous day , ending at 7 in the evening as polling stations close ; exit polls may be published after that time . Unless the presidential term is cut short by death , resignation or removal from office , resulting in an early election , the elections for President of the Republic are scheduled to take place every 5 years , with the incumbent having a possibility of re @-@ election . The president is currently term limited to two 5 @-@ year terms .

= = = 2014 ? 15 presidential election = = =

= = = Next presidential election = = =

The next presidential election in Croatia is due to be held no more than 60 and no less than 30 days before the expiry of the current president's term, as stated in the Constitution of Croatia. If the current president serves her full term, which began on 19 February 2015 and lasts for 5 years, the election must be held on a date between 21 December 2019 and 20 January 2020.

The current, 4th president of the Republic Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, can run for reelection to a second term. Another eligible candidate is former president Ivo Josipović, who lost the 2015 election after serving one term and is therefore also eligible to run for reelection.

Possible candidates:

-Kolinda Grabar Kitarović - incumbent president (2015-)

-Ivo Josipović - 3rd president of Croatia (2010 - 2015)

= = = Previous presidential elections = = =

Presidential elections were held in Croatia for the first time on 2 August 1992, concurrently with the 1992 parliamentary elections. Voter turnout was 74.9 percent. The result was a victory for Franjo Tuđman of the HDZ, who received 57.8 percent of the vote in the first round of the election (ahead of seven other candidates). Dražen Budiša, the HSLHS candidate and runner-up in the election, received 22.3 percent of the vote. The second presidential election in modern Croatia was held on 15 June 1997. The incumbent, Franjo Tuđman, ran opposed by Zdravko Tomac (candidate of the SDP) and Vlado Gotovac (nominated by the HSLHS). Tomac and Gotovac received 21.0 and 17.6 percent of votes, respectively, in the first round of voting and Tuđman secured another term. The third presidential elections were held on 24 January 2000 to fill the office of President, after incumbent Franjo Tuđman died on 10 December 1999. The first round of voting saw Stjepan Mesić (candidate of the Croatian People's Party, or HNS) in front with 41.3 percent of the vote, followed by Dražen Budiša of the HSLHS with 27.8 percent and Mate Granić (nominated by the HDZ) receiving 22.6 percent. The runoff election (the first in a modern Croatian presidential election) was held on 7 February; Mesić won, picking up 56.9 percent of the vote. Voter turnout was 63.0 percent in the first round, and 60.9 percent in the runoff. The first round of the fourth presidential election was held on 2 January 2005. No candidate secured a first-round victory; however, incumbent Mesić enjoyed a substantial lead over the other candidates. Mesić received 48.9 percent of the vote; the second- and third-ranked candidates (Jadranka Kosor of the HDZ and Boris Mikšić, an independent) managed only 20.3 and 17.8 percent, respectively, of voter support. Ultimately, Mesić won reelection by receiving 65.9 percent of votes in the runoff held on 16 January. The most recent Croatian presidential election was held on 27 December 2009 with Ivo Josipović (SDP) picking up 32.4 percent of the vote, followed by Milan Bandić (independent), Andrija Hebrang (HDZ) and Nadan Vidojević (independent) receiving 14.8, 12.0 and 11.3 percent of the vote respectively. The second round of voting was held on 10 January 2010, when Josipović defeated Bandić with 60.3 percent of the vote.

= = Local elections = =

Croatia's county prefects, city and town mayors are elected to four-year terms by a majority of votes cast within applicable local government units, with a runoff election if no candidate achieves a majority in the first round of voting. Members of county, city and municipal councils are elected to four-year terms through proportional representation, with the entire local government unit as a single constituency. The number of council members is defined by the councils themselves, based on applicable legislation. Electoral committees are tasked with

determining whether the national minorities are represented in the council (as required by the constitution) , adding further members to the council (who belong to the appropriate minorities) by selecting them from unelected @-@ candidate lists . Election silence , as in all other elections in Croatia , is enforced on the day of the elections and the previous day , ending at 7 : 00 pm when the polling stations close and exit polls may be announced .

Of the six nationwide local elections held in Croatia since 1990 , the most recent were the 2009 local elections to elect county prefects and councils , city and town councils and mayors . In these elections , HDZ @-@ led coalitions won a majority or plurality in 15 county @-@ council and 13 county @-@ prefect elections . SDP @-@ led coalitions won a majority or plurality in five county councils (including the city of Zagreb council) , and the single remaining county council election was won by an IDS @-@ SDP coalition . The SDP won four county prefect elections and the city of Zagreb mayoral election , the HSS won three county @-@ prefect elections , and the HNS and HDSSB won one county @-@ prefect election each .

= = European Parliament elections = =

Croatia first elected 12 members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in a by @-@ election held after its accession to the EU in 2013 . Thereafter , its number of members in the European Parliament was reduced to 11 and the country elected them as part of the regular election in 2014 . The elections are regulated by special legislation enacted by the Sabor . Provisions of the legislation are very similar to the parliamentary @-@ election legislation , with the main difference being that the 11 members of the European Parliament are elected in a single constituency encompassing all of Croatia , instead of multiple constituencies used in the parliamentary elections .

= = Referendums = =

A referendum in Croatia can be called by the Parliament or the President on any issue falling within the purview of parliament , or on any other issue the president considers important to the independence , unity and existence of the republic . Since the constitution was amended in 2001 , parliament is obligated by the constitution to call for a referendum if signatures of 10 percent of registered Croatian voters are collected . The signatures , by law , must be collected within a 15 @-@ day period . Referendums are regulated by Article 87 of the constitution of Croatia which requires that the parliament passes an act on each referendum and that the outcome is binding unless the referendum is called as an advisory referendum .

There have been three referendums in modern Croatia : Croatian independence referendum , Croatian European Union membership referendum and Marriage definition referendum , and in all three majority voted in favor . There have been four other public initiatives to collect the support of 10 percent of voters for a referendum , none of which were successful : concerning Croatian cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia , concerning accession of Croatia to NATO in 2008 , concerning Arbitration Agreement on Croatian @-@ Slovenian border issues in 2009 , and concerning Labour Act in 2010 .

= = Political campaigns = =

Any Croatian citizen aged 18 or over may become a candidate in presidential , parliamentary or local elections . In order to become an official candidate , 10 @,@ 000 signatures from Croatian citizens aged 18 or over must be collected and submitted to the State Electoral Commission . This must be done within 12 days following the publication of the decision to hold elections in Narodne Novine , the official gazette of the Republic of Croatia . The endorsements are made in a list comprising name , address and personal identification number (PIN) of each of the citizens supporting a particular candidate . Each citizen may only endorse a single candidate . The election commission verifies the endorsement lists , publishes the candidate list in all daily newspapers in Croatia (and on Croatian Radiotelevision) and delivers it to the Croatian diplomatic missions for

publication .

In parliamentary elections , 14 @-@ member election lists may be submitted to the State Electoral Commission for any number of constituencies in Croatia . A 14 @-@ member list of candidates may also be submitted for the Croatian diaspora constituency , while a two @-@ member list can be submitted for the ethnic @-@ minority representatives . In each case , 500 endorsements are required for an election list to become valid . The lists may be supported by one or more political parties , or by a group of voters as an independent list . No one may be a candidate on two or more lists simultaneously .

The same procedure applies to local elections , except that council @-@ election lists require 100 , 150 and 500 endorsements for town , city and county @-@ council lists respectively . The city of Zagreb council is treated as a county council under election law . The number of voter signatures on mayoral and county prefect candidate nominations ranges between 50 (for mayoral elections in towns of up to 1 @,@ 000 residents) , 100 (for other town mayoral candidates) , 500 (for mayoral elections in cities of up to 35 @,@ 000 residents) , 1 @,@ 000 (in cities with populations between 35 @,@ 000 and 100 @,@ 000) and 2 @,@ 000 endorsements for cities of 100 @,@ 000 residents or more (with the exception of Zagreb) . County prefect election candidates require 2 @,@ 500 endorsements , and candidates running for mayor of Zagreb need 5 @,@ 000 voter endorsements for their nominations to become valid .

Candidates running for European Parliament seats need not be Croatian citizens and may hold citizenship in any member state of the European Union , while having a permanent (or temporary) residence in Croatia . Their nominations are valid if endorsed by 5 @,@ 000 Croatian voters .

= = = Funding = = =

The funding of political parties , independent politicians and election campaigns is relatively highly regulated in comparison with developed western democracies . Applicable legislation encompasses cash receipts , provision of free services (except the labour of volunteers) , and products and other forms of support (including membership fees) . The legislation also stipulates that the government budget provides funding for political parties and non @-@ partisan political representatives in the amount of 0 @.@ 05 percent of the previous year 's budget expenditures . Additional funds are appropriated in local government budgets . The funds are distributed to elected members of parliament and councils , and the political parties with which they are affiliated receive 10 percent of the funds . Each election candidate (or slate) must have a dedicated bank account to handle election @-@ campaign donations , other related funding , and all campaign @-@ related expenditures . The maximum donation to a single party , candidate or slate made in a year is also regulated . In cases of individuals it is set at 30 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 4 @,@ 050 euro) , regardless of purpose . Companies and other legal persons are limited to the same amount in local elections ; 100 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 13 @,@ 500 euro) for parliamentary or European Parliament elections and 200 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 27 @,@ 000 euro) for presidential elections to any one candidate , party or slate (whichever is applicable) . Total campaign expenditures are also limited to 8 million kuna (c . 1 @.@ 08 million euro) per candidate in presidential elections , 1 @.@ 5 million kuna (c . 202 @,@ 000 euro) per candidate (or slate) in European Parliament or parliamentary elections , 500 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 67 @,@ 600 euro) per candidate in Zagreb mayoral elections and 400 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 54 @,@ 000 euro) per candidate in county @-@ prefect or mayoral elections in cities of 35 @,@ 000 residents or larger and in county seats . Mayoral election @-@ campaign expenditures in other cities and towns is also limited , depending on the local government 's population : 250 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 33 @,@ 800 euro) if the population exceeds 10 @,@ 000 residents , 100 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 13 @,@ 500 euro) in population units of 3 @,@ 000 ? 10 @,@ 000 and up to 50 @,@ 000 kuna (c . 6 @,@ 750 euro) in smaller self @-@ governing units . All candidates and parties (or slates) are legally required to publish financial reports detailing their funding , which are audited by the State Electoral Commission and the State Audit Office . They are also legally required to turn over all receipts exceeding the legal limits in favour of the central government budget within eight days .

In the 2007 parliamentary elections , the leading political parties reported campaign spending as follows : the Croatian Democratic Union spent 19 @. @ 5 million kuna (c . 2 @. @ 6 million euro) , the Social Democratic Party of Croatia spent 15 @. @ 8 million kuna (c . 2 @. @ 1 million euro) , the Croatian People 's Party ? Liberal Democrats spent 9 million kuna (c . 1 @. @ 2 million euro) , while the Croatian Peasant Party led coalition reported spending 8 million kuna (c . 1 @. @ 08 million euro) and the Croatian Party of Rights spent a similar amount .

All presidential election candidates receiving at least 10 percent of the vote are awarded an equal sum as election @-@ campaign reimbursement . The amount is decided by the government at least 30 days before the election . This amount was set at 250 @, @ 000 kuna (c . 33 @, @ 800 euro) for the 2009 ? 2010 presidential election , representing a 50 @-@ percent decrease from the sum determined for the previous presidential election (when the reimbursement sum was set at half @-@ a @-@ million kuna) . Similarly , the government also reimburses the political parties and slates for each parliamentary seat won . For the 2011 parliamentary election , each seat will be given 180 @, @ 000 kuna (c . 24 @, @ 300 euro) . A sum of 30 @, @ 000 kuna (c . 4 @, @ 050 euro) will be paid to parties or candidates failing to win any parliamentary seats if they receive more than five percent of votes in a constituency . In addition , national @-@ minority @-@ representative candidates running on the minority ballot failing to win parliamentary seats (but still winning at least 15 percent of votes in their constituency) will receive 27 @, @ 000 kuna (c . 3 @, @ 650 euro) if the minority comprises less than 1 @. @ 5 percent of the total population of Croatia . All European Parliament election candidates and county @-@ prefect and mayoral @-@ election candidates receiving at least 10 percent of the vote are also entitled to receive reimbursement of costs in an amount determined by the government ahead of each election .

= = = Media coverage and promotion = = =

Legislation requires that all presidential and parliamentary election candidates (or slates) are guaranteed equal opportunity to present and discuss their platforms in the media (in addition to paid advertising) . In 2007 the parliamentary election campaign was covered by all media , including nationwide television broadcasters . During this period the broadcasters , which included Croatian Radiotelevision (HTV) , RTL Televizija (RTL) and Nova TV , aired 27 @. @ 8 hours of news on 22 different programs with 1 @, @ 196 news reports . This total included 171 reports dealing directly with the elections . Analysis of news coverage indicated evenly @-@ matched coverage of the combined ruling party (HDZ) and official government statements on one side , and the main opposition party (SDP) on the other ; each received an average of a 37 @. @ 5 @-@ percent share of coverage and a 33 @-@ percent share of interviews aired . HTV and Nova TV gave a slight advantage to the HDZ and the government , while RTL gave more coverage to the SDP . However , the differences were small and resulted in matching ratios . Other political parties received considerably less coverage . HNS received an average of approximately 11 percent of the coverage , HSS received six percent and all other parties received less than five @-@ percent coverage . The national television broadcasters air programs where all slates and candidates may talk about their platforms and organise debates .

Paid promotion largely followed this pattern , as the HDZ and the SDP were two dominant parties in that field as well . The Organization for Security and Co @-@ operation in Europe (OSCE) noted in its report that the largest parties reported their advertising spending below their actual value , and the largest proportion of expenditure was for television ads . Election silence is in force on the day of the elections and the previous day , ending at 7 in the evening as polling stations close and exit polls may be published after that time .

= = Voting and appeals = =

Polling stations are set up in public buildings throughout the country ; voters may only vote at their assigned polling station (according to their permanent residence) , but voters deployed abroad in the armed forces , voters on Croatian @-@ flagged ships and imprisoned voters are allowed to vote

elsewhere . Other voters residing in Croatia , but traveling abroad on election day may vote at Croatian diplomatic missions . Polling stations are open from 7 : 00 am until 7 : 00 pm , but all voters present at the polling stations at closing time are allowed to vote . Polling stations may be closed early if all registered voters have voted . Presidential election ballots contain a list of candidates verified by the State Electoral Commission , in alphabetical order . This entails the name and PIN of each candidate , and the names of political parties endorsing the candidate (or a note that the candidate is running as an independent . The names are preceded by ordinal numbers . Parliamentary election and European Parliament election ballots contain the name of the slate and the name of the person heading the list , in addition to candidates , who is not necessarily a candidate on the particular list , but may be included as a figurehead symbolizing specific political party or a coalition putting forward the list ? usually head of the party of coalition at the national level . The lists are in alphabetical order and preceded by an ordinal number . Voting is done by circling the number associated with a particular candidate . Ballots marked otherwise (but positively indicating a candidate for which a vote is cast) are also considered valid . Blank ballots and ballots on which multiple numbers are circled (or multiple candidates are otherwise indicated) are invalid . Official results are announced and published by the State Electoral Commission .

= = = Voter registry = = =

The register of voters in Croatia is defined by law . The register lists all citizens of Croatia aged 18 and over , except those who have been stripped of their voting rights by a court decision . The register is organized according to legal residence (prebivalište) and maintained by government offices in counties and the city of Zagreb . Each citizen of Croatia may request a review of the register and amendments to personal information (supported by applicable documents) . The voter register is used to confirm the right to vote at the polling station and to verify voter endorsements of candidates and election lists submitted to the electoral commissions . Voters who expect to travel in Croatia or abroad on election day may require inclusion in a provisional list which allows them to vote at a polling station other than that assigned to them by residence . Failing that , a voter may obtain an excerpt from the registry on election day to be allowed to vote .

A pattern of irregularities has been discovered concerning the updating of the list when citizens of Croatia turn 18 or die . In 2005 , it was estimated that the register contained a large number of irregularities and erroneous entries . Since then , public attention was directed to the issue by NGOs monitoring elections through roundtables and advertising campaigns ; according to GONG ? a NGO specializing in election monitoring ? although the register was improved , there is room for further improvement . The 2011 census also indicated a large number of voters in the registry who should not be there , leading to claims that up to a half @-@ million voters in the registry should not be included .

= = = Complaints and appeals = = =

Political parties , candidates and voters who have endorsed a particular candidate (or state) in presidential , parliamentary or European Parliament elections may file complaints with the State Electoral Commission regarding irregularities in the election process within 48 hours of a disputed activity . In the European Parliament elections , voter complaints are required to be endorsed by at least 100 voters (or five percent of the voters) . If the commission finds the complaint valid , it will order the part of the election process directly affected by the disputed activity to be repeated (possibly postponing the election date if there is insufficient time left) . The commission must provide its decision within 48 hours after the complaint is submitted . The decision may be appealed before the Constitutional Court of Croatia within 48 hours of its receipt and once petitioned , the court must return a ruling within 48 hours . In local council elections , complaints are processed by county , city or town electoral commissions (as appropriate) . In mayoral elections , complaints are filed with the county electoral commission . This does not apply to Zagreb mayoral elections , where complaints are submitted to the State Electoral Commission (the case also in county prefect elections) . The

time allowances and appeals procedure are the same as for presidential and parliamentary elections

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= = = Monitoring = = =

Elections are governed by the State Electoral Commission and electoral boards . Members of those bodies are required to have a university degree in law , and they may not be members of any political party . The State Electoral Commission prepares and manages elections in accordance with legislation , appoints lower @-@ ranking election @-@ commission and board members , issues directives to such bodies and supervises their work . The State Electoral Commission compiles and publishes candidate lists , supervises the legality of political campaigns and compiles and publishes election results . All members of election boards (or their legal deputies) must be present at assigned polling stations at all times while the polling station is open . The board verifies the identity of voters against the list of registered voters and records the turnout . The turnout number is later checked against number of votes cast ; if the number of votes exceeds the turnout , the election at that polling station must be repeated . Votes are tallied by hand , and that information is forwarded (along with all other records kept at the polling station) to the State Electoral Commission .

Further monitoring is performed by non @-@ governmental organizations specializing in election monitoring , such as GONG . There are also other monitoring organisations headquartered in Croatia and abroad ; the OSCE set up a limited monitoring mission to observe the 2009 ? 2010 presidential elections . The last parliamentary election (held in 2007) was monitored by 8 @, @ 540 observers fielded by a number of organisations and political parties .