

We invite everyone, regardless of their political affiliation, to become a member or supporter of The Electoral Reform Society and work together in improving the parliamentary and municipal election systems.

This can be accomplished by completing the application form and sending it by e-mail or regular mail, or personally delivering it to the Society's office at Vīlandes iela 17-13, Rīga, LV - 1010.



Vēlēšanu reformas biedrība

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Further information (in Latvian only) about The Electoral Reform Society and videos of the forums “A Good Parliamentary System – What Is It?” and “Parliamentary elections in a new quality? Opportunities for voters, challenges for politicians” may be found in the Society’s web page: www.velref.lv.

Do you know who speaks for you in parliament?

When was the last time a member of parliament spoke to you?

Are you satisfied with those elected to parliament?

Don't you think it's time to reform the parliamentary election system?



✦ VĒL

Vēlēšanu reformas biedrība

**The Electoral Reform Society
of Latvia**

A good election system fosters good government.

The Electoral Reform Society

Founded: May, 2007 to address those, who care for what is happening in Latvian politics.

Purpose: To analyse the parliamentary and municipal election systems and prepare proposals for their improvement

The Society:

- Organises forums, seminars and presentations about electoral systems.
- Facilitates the exchange of ideas on current political issues in open discussion meetings.
- Distributes a monthly newsletter on topics related to elections.
- Cooperates with other NGO's, the government and political parties to promote discussion about the need for electoral reform.
- Is independent financially and politically.

The Board of the Society performs its functions without remuneration.

Board Members

Chairman: Valdis Liepiņš (M.A. Oxford University)

Vice Chairman: Veiko Spolītis (Political scientist)

Members: Ivars Redisons (Lawyer), Lauma Silakaktiņa (Political scientist) and Gatis Puriņš (Political scientist).

A Council of Experts presents to the board its opinions on specific questions of electoral reform.

Members of the Council

Chairman: Juris Rozenvalds;

Vice Chairman: Jānis Pleps;

Members: Daunis Auers, Lolita Čigāne, Arvīds Dravnieks, Juris Dreifelds, Aivars Endziņš, Ivars Ijabs, Jānis Ikstens, Tālav Jundzis, Arnis Kaktiņš, Iveta Kažoka, Egils Levits, Aleksandrs Maļcevs, Jānis Peniķis, Juris Prikulis, Ziedonis Rags, Andris Runcis, Jānis Stradiņš, Visvaldis Valtenbergs, Alfrēds Vanags and Brigita Zepa.

The Society's first task was to assess what a good parliamentary election system should strive to accomplish and then to evaluate the current parliamentary election system against this background. The results were not favourable to the current system. The main problem is that it distances the elected from the electors, which is confirmed by political opinion surveys.

On the basis of the Board's and the Council's analyses, as well as the conclusions of the forum "A Good Parliamentary System – What Is It?", organised by the Society in December, 2007, the Society prepared recommendations for reform, that require changes only to the Parliamentary Election Law and not the Constitution. The principal recommendation was the banning of candidates simultaneously standing for election in more than one electoral district. This recommendation passed into law on February 26th, 2009.

"Since it will no longer be possible to rely on "locomotives", party leaders, by favouring those obedient to them, risk presenting candidates, who are noxious to voters or simply unknown to them"

/Aivars Ozoliņš, the newspaper "Diena", 06.03.2009/

The elimination of multi district candidacies presents electors, civic society and politicians with new possibilities and challenges. The Electoral Reform Society considers that parliament must implement further reforms in order to narrow the divide between the elected and the electors. These are:

- Introduction of smaller electoral districts, more familiar to electors, while preserving party proportionality in parliament.
- Basing elections on the electoral roll such that electors vote in the district where they are registered.
- Providing electors ready and easy access to the voting history of each Member of Parliament.
- Fostering direct dialogue between the electors and the elected through public pre- and post-election meetings.

These amendments are necessary to enhance contact between electors and elected and the accountability of Members of Parliament to their electors.