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## **Polish Electoral System to the European Parliament: Drawbacks and Alternatives**

**Keywords:** European elections in Poland, electoral systems, electoral districts, deviations from proportionality in seat distribution

**Słowa kluczowe:** wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce, systemy wyborcze, okręgi wyborcze, odchylnia od proporcjonalności

### **Abstract**

The Polish electoral system to the European Parliament has been criticized for as long as it has been in operation; that is, uninterruptedly since 2004. The commonest objections and criticisms concern the lack of the fixed assignment of seats to territorial districts; significant and unjustified differences in population size among districts; risk of not winning a single seat by the smallest districts; unequal territorial representation; overcomplicated and unclear mechanism of translating votes into seats and in consequence creation of an illusion of a territorial representation. However, there are at least four alternative electoral systems which are able to eliminate all the drawbacks of the current model while warranting the proportional seat distribution both among electoral districts in accordance with the principle of material equality of each vote and among election committees pursuant to the requirements set for the electoral systems of the member countries by the European Union law. The aim of the paper is to compare these alternatives with the current model, pinpoint the drawbacks and advantages of each solution and indicate which criteria are optimized by the respective electoral systems.

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**Streszczenie****Wady i alternatywy polskiego systemu wyborczego do Parlamentu Europejskiego**

Obowiązujący w Polsce nieprzerwanie od 2004 r. system wyborczy jest krytykowany od samego początku jego funkcjonowania. Zastrzeżenia i uwagi najczęściej dotyczą nieprzypisania mandatów na stałe do okręgów terytorialnych, nieuzasadnionych i znaczących różnic populacyjnych w obrębie okręgów, ryzyka nieuzyskania ani jednego mandatu przez najmniejsze okręgi, nierówną reprezentację terytorialną, skomplikowanie i nieprzejrzystość systemu podziału głosów na mandaty, paradoksalne podziały mandatów pomiędzy okręgi wyborcze, a w konsekwencji stwarzanie iluzji reprezentacji terytorialnej. Tymczasem istnieją co najmniej cztery alternatywne systemy wyborcze, które eliminując wszystkie wady obecnego modelu gwarantowałyby proporcjonalny podział mandatów zarówno pomiędzy okręgi wyborcze zgodnie z zasadą równości materialnej głosu, jak również pomiędzy komitety wyborcze zgodnie z wymaganiami stawianymi krajowym systemom wyborczym przez prawo europejskie. Celem tego artykułu jest porównanie tych alternatyw z obecnym modelem, wskazanie wad i zalet każdego rozwiązania oraz kryteriów optymalizowanych przez każdy z nich.

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**I. Characterization of the Polish Electoral System to the European Parliament**

The Polish elections to the European Parliament are universal, direct, proportional and anonymous. The legislator decided to have a territorial model of representation based on thirteen electoral districts overlapping, in principle, with the borders of voivodeships. This model follows the German electoral system. Within it the seat allocation is essentially decided on the basis of the results obtained on the national level. Seats in electoral districts are distributed in accordance with the number of votes cast for the regional lists of those election committees which participate in the seat allocation on the national level. The election committees that

take part in the elections propose and register their lists of candidates for MEPs in specific electoral districts in which voters vote for the lists. The above procedure notwithstanding, both the vote aggregation and consequently the seat aggregation take place at the national level rather than at the level of regional constituencies.

Initially, votes cast for all candidates proposed by a given election committee in a given electoral district are summed up (let us call this sum a committee's district number). The process of summing up is conducted separately for each committee in each district. Then all district numbers of each committee are summed up (let us call this value a committee's national number). Only those committees take part in the seat distribution which won at least 5% of valid votes weighted on the national level. Committees' national numbers are being divided by consecutive natural numbers so long as the resultant quotients can give as many largest numbers as there are MEPs to be elected in Poland. Consequently, each committee wins as many seats as many consecutive quotients it obtains in this procedure. The distribution of seats is, therefore, arrived via the d'Hondt method.

The above procedure enables one to say how many seats have been won by particular election committees. However, due to the fact that votes are cast for specific persons in territorial districts, one must "move" the mandates won by the committees to districts in order to distribute them among individual politicians. At this point the second phase of the seat allocation starts. A given committee's district numbers are multiplied by the number of seats won by the committee. Obtained products are in turn divided by the committee's national number. The result in the form of an integer number (that is before the coma) is the number of seats won by the list in a given electoral district. Generally, it is unlikely that all the seats won by a given committee on the national level can be distributed this way. Remaining seats are allocated to district lists which have the highest values after the comas (largest remainder method) in the previously calculated quotients. Hence, this phase of the seat allocation is conducted in accordance with the Hare-Niemeyer method. Seats won by a given district list are distributed among those candidates from the list who received the highest consecutive numbers of votes.

## II. Drawbacks of the Current Electoral System

The Polish electoral system to the European Parliament has been criticized for as long as it has been in operation; that is, uninterruptedly since 2004. One can find many objections to it formulated in the source literature, especially concerning the applied model of the seat distribution among electoral districts. The most common criticisms of the system pertain to the lack of the fixed assignment of seats to territorial districts; the lack of consistency and clear criteria of division of voivodeships into electoral districts; significant and unjustified differences in population size among districts; a risk that the smallest districts will not win a single seat; unequal territorial representation; overcomplicated and unclear mechanism of translating votes into seats; paradoxes of the seat distribution among regional lists; inciting rivalry inside political parties over district borders instead of rivalry between different parties inside a district; inconsistent relationships between numbers of seats and voter turnouts in various districts; creation of an illusion of a territorial representation; limiting proportionality of elections by the electoral threshold that is unjustified by the character and function of the elections to the European Parliament<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> P. Sarnecki, *W sprawie procedury wyborczej do Parlamentu Europejskiego*, "Przeгляд Sejmowy" 2003, No. 5, pp. 36–38; S. Gebethner, K. Urbaniak, *Przyszły polski system wyborczy do Parlamentu Europejskiego w świetle prawa wspólnotowego i analizy prawoporównawczej*, "Przeгляд Legislacyjny" 2003, No. 1; W. Peszyński, *Pierwsze wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce*, Toruń 2007, p. 37, 108; K. Składowski, *Ordynacja do Parlamentu Europejskiego (kilka uwag de lege ferenda)*, "Studia Wyborcze" 2008, No. 5; P. Uziębło, *Zasada równości w wyborach do Sejmu RP (wybrane zagadnienia)*, "Studia Wyborcze" 2008, No. 6, pp. 54–55; R. Głajcar, *System wyborczy do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce*, [in:] *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce 2009*, eds. R. Głajcar, W. Wojtasik, Katowice 2010, p. 59, 68; J. Flis, *Kwadratura okręgu. Ordynacja wyborcza do parlamentu europejskiego jako instytucjonalna rama komunikowania społecznego*, [in:] *Polska scena polityczna. Środowiska – komunikacja polityczna – strategie*, eds. K. Sobolewska-Myślik, A. Hess, K. Kowalczyk, Cracov 2010; B. Michalak, *Dlaczego obecny model podziału na okręgi wyborcze do Parlamentu Europejskiego jest wadliwy i czy jest dla niego alternatywa?*, "Studia Wyborcze" 2010, No. 10; B. Michalak, *Kto traci a kto zyskuje na systemie podziału mandatów pomiędzy okręgi w wyborach do Parlamentu Europejskiego w Polsce?*, "Przeгляд Sejmowy" 2015, No. 1; B. Michalak, *Jak poprawić system wyborczy do Parlamentu Europejskiego, aby uczynić wybory bardziej przejrzystymi?* Warsaw 2018.

A detailed analysis of electoral data demonstrates that during the last four European elections that took place in Poland 17.5% of seats were assigned to districts in a way that was inconsistent with the principle of proportional allocation and 75% of divisions into districts deviated more than 10% in terms of their district norms of representation from the uniform norm of representation<sup>3</sup>.

**Chart 1. Disproportional seat distribution among electoral districts in the elections to the EP in Poland 2004–2019**

No.	Capital of the electoral district	Year of election → Voivodeships belonging to the electoral district	2004			2009			2014			2019		
			S	S'	D	S	S'	D	S	S'	D	S	S'	D
1	Gdańsk	Pomeranian	2	3	-1	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
2	Bydgoszcz	Kuyavian-Pomeranian	1	3	-2	3	3	0	3	3	0	2	3	-1
3	Olsztyn	Warmian-Masurian, Podlaskie	2	4	-2	2	3	-1	2	3	-1	3	3	0
4	Warsaw	part of the Masovian (with Warsaw)	5	4	1	5	4	1	5	4	1	6	4	2
5	Warszawa	part of the Masovian (without Warsaw)	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
6	Łódź	Łódź	4	4	0	3	3	0	2	3	-1	3	3	0
7	Poznań	Grater Poland	6	5	1	5	4	1	5	5	0	5	5	0
8	Lublin	Lublin	4	3	1	2	3	-1	2	3	-1	3	3	0
9	Rzeszów	Subcarpathian	2	3	-1	2	3	-1	3	3	0	3	3	0

<sup>3</sup> Within the purview of the Polish electoral law the uniform norm of representation refers to the number of inhabitants per one seat. Compliance with the norm guarantees that the seat distribution will be conducted in accordance with the principle of the material equality of each vote. Mathematically speaking, the uniform norm of representation is identical with the simple/Hare quota.

		Year of election →	2004			2009			2014			2019		
10	Cracov	Lesser Poland, Świętokrzyskie	8	6	2	7	6	1	7	6	1	5	6	-1
11	Katowice	Silesian	8	7	1	6	6	0	7	6	1	7	6	1
12	Wrocław	Lower Silesian, Opole	7	5	2	5	5	0	6	5	1	4	5	-1
13	Gorzów Wielkopolski	Lubusz, West Pomeranian	2	4	-2	4	4	0	3	4	-1	4	4	0

Key: No. – number of electoral district; Capital of the electoral district – residence of the district election commission; Voivodeships belonging to the electoral district – names of voivodeships comprising a district; S – actual number of seats allocated to particular districts after the elections; S' – number of seats that should be allocated to particular districts on the basis of the proportional seat allocation; D – deviation from the proportional allocation in seat distribution among the constituencies ( $D = S - S'$ ).

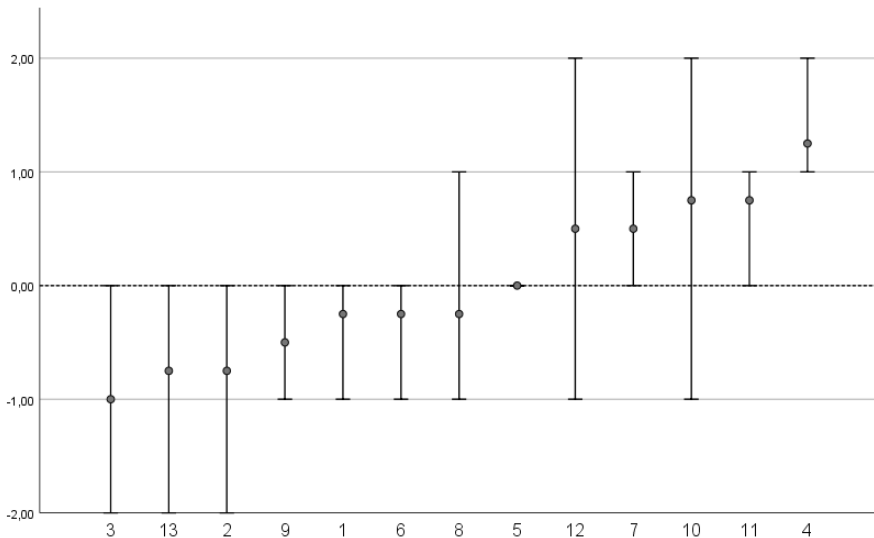
Source: author's own calculations based on the National Electoral Commission's data from consecutive elections.

The injustice of the seat allocation under the current system includes not only a deviation from the principle of material equality but also the fact that districts with comparable numbers of voters have different representations. In 2004 districts No. 2 and No. 9 had almost identical numbers of voters (1.6 million) but won different number of seats (1 and 2, respectively) whereas district No. 8 which had slightly more than 100 thousand voters won 4 seats. In 2009 the difference between districts No. 4 and No. 3 amounted to 39 thousand voters and yet district No. 4 won 3 seats more than district No. 3. In turn, in 2014 district No. 4 with its 2.2 million voters won 2 seats more than district No. 13 which had only 40 thousand voters less. In 2019 district No. 10 won 2 seats less than district No. 11, even though the difference in terms of voters between the two districts was 152 thousand in favor of the former.

The figure below presents the spread of deviations of particular allocations in districts (Y-axis) from the standard proportional distribution. Value equal 0 represents proportional allocation. Value higher than 0 represents allocation of extra seats and vice versa. The dot shows the average spread from all elections. As one can readily see, the Polish electoral system systemati-

cally favors some districts; that is, districts No. 7 (Greater Poland Voivodeship), No. 11 (Silesian Voivodeship) and, above all, No. 4 (part of Masovian Voivodeship with the capital city of Warsaw). The latter district has always been winning 1 or 2 seats more than it should have. Interestingly, the rest of Masovian Voivodeship (district No. 5) has been winning the number of seats proportional to the number of voters. At the other extreme are districts (No. 6, No. 1, No. 9, No. 2, No. 13, No. 3) that have never won extra seats. In this regard district No. 3, comprising Warmian-Masurian and Podlaskie Voivodeships, has been especially disadvantaged. In turn, districts no. 8, No. 10 and No. 12 have sometimes been favored and sometimes punished.

**Figure 1. Deviation from proportional allocation in seat distribution among the electoral districts in elections to the European Parliament in Poland 2004–2019**



Source: author's own calculations.

The current mechanism of the seat distribution among electoral districts neither treats equal equally nor similar similarly what leads to large discrepancies in the voting power of voters in various districts and consequently to the unjust seat distribution. Moreover, the system in question not only di-

vides seats unequally among districts but also inconsistently and without any reasonable criteria favors districts having the same number of voters or proportion of people actually voting only to discriminate against them on other occasions. Contrary to the common opinion, the current system does not guarantee more seats for a district with the higher turnout either. Neither assures it that each district will win a seat – a plight that almost befell Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship in 2004.

### **III. Alternatives to the Current Electoral System**

Research results clearly show that there are no rational or prudential reasons for sustaining the current model of Polish elections to the European Parliament. There are four alternative electoral systems worth considering. Each of them allows the political process to avoid the paradoxes of the present model and guarantees the proportional seat distribution both among electoral districts and among election committees. The alternatives to the current system are presented in order of their respective consistency with electoral systems used in Poland.

#### **List Proportional Representation System with Five Regional Electoral Districts**

This proposal refers to the model of proportional representation used in majority of Polish elections (elections to the Sejm or to the legislative bodies of the local government) in multi-member electoral districts. In this variant a few large territorial districts with a fixed number of seats should be created. The area of such an electoral district should then cover a few voivodeships. The most optimal solution would be a model with five electoral districts. That would allow the system to both sustain some level of district cohesiveness (what would in turn create a real relation between voters and their representatives) and maintain the proportional mechanism of translating votes into seats among the election committees. Voters would then vote for the lists of candidates proposed in these five districts and the seat distribution among election committees – as it happens in the elections to the Sejm – would also take place in the districts.



**Chart 2. Proposed division into five electoral districts with the number of seats distributed among them**

No.	Voivodeships belonging to the electoral districts	Voters	Seats
1	Pomeranian, Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Warmian-Masurian	5 552 793	8
2	Łódź, Masovian, Podlaskie	8 725 838	12
3	Lesser Poland, Świętokrzyskie, Subcarpathian, Lublin	8 718 771	12
4	Lower Silesian, Silesian, Opole	7 962 710	11
5	West Pomeranian, Greater Poland, Lubusz	5 926 463	8

Source: author's own calculation based on the National Electoral Commission's data on the number of voters in the 2019 elections.

This variant combines in one district these voivodeships which are socially, geographically and historically similar. Such a maneuver creates an opportunity to fight for the common interests in the European Union arena and does not vitiate the “closeness” desideratum. Besides, the proportionality of this system would be satisfactorily realized, creating thereby opportunities for smaller political formations. Not without a relevance is the fact that all voivodeships would be in the same situation; that is, not a single voivodeship would constitute an electoral district<sup>4</sup>. The district size would then fluctuate from 5.5 million to 8.7 million of voters what would result in 8 to 12 fixed seats (10 seats per district on average). The proportionality of the seat distribution among electoral districts in accordance with the number of voters would be perfect and the voting power of voters in particular districts would be equal. The only exception would be the district No. 1 where the voting power would be negligibly smaller and the district No. 5 where the voting power would be slightly bigger. These, however, would constitute only marginal deviations.

One can of course criticize this proposal by arguing that districts created in such a way would be too big and include too heterogeneous regions. There

<sup>4</sup> B. Michalak, *Dlaczego...*, pp. 18–19.

is another method of combining voivodeships<sup>5</sup>. It would give less proportional distribution of votes among election committees than other variants<sup>6</sup>.

### **List Proportional Representation System with One Nationwide Electoral District**

The simplest solution nullifying the drawbacks and paradoxes of the current regulation is the elimination of territorial districts and introduction of one multi-member district at the national level. In such a system voters would vote for the same lists of candidates. Depending on the kind of the accepted solution, it could be a list with a preferential vote (as it has been so far) or voting for the whole list *en block* as it is in the case of the closed list systems. In actual fact, such a nationwide electoral district has been in operation in European Parliament elections since the very beginning. It is due to the fact that the seat distribution among election committees takes place at the national level and only in the second move are seats distributed among specific territorial districts.

Introducing one electoral district is not against the European Union law and is or was practiced in such European Union countries as Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Hungary. It seems that application of such a solution would match the expectations and perceptions of the Polish society concerning the national representation in the European Parliament. For according to the common opinion, Polish MEPs should primarily represent national interests in the European Union.

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<sup>5</sup> An alternative variant of this division was proposed in 2003 by S. Gebethner and K. Urbaniak. According to this proposal, district No. 1 would comprise areas of West Pomeranian, Pomeranian and Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeships (8 seats); district No. 2 – Warmian-Masurian, Masovian and Podlaskie Voivodeships (10 seats); district No. 3 – Lesser Poland, Świętokrzyskie, Subcarpatian and Lublin Voivodeships (11 seats); district No. 4 – Silesian and Opole Voivodeships (12 seats); district No. 5 – Lubusz, Łódź and Greater Poland Voivodeships (9 seats). S. Gebethner, K. Urbaniak, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> For example, for the 2019 election results the deviation from the proportional translation of votes into seats would be only less than 2 percentage points bigger at the level of the proportionality index.

The proposed solution guarantees the highest possible level of proportionality regardless of the mechanism of translating votes into seats and simplifies the election process in many of its aspects such as, for example, registration procedure for candidates, distribution of voting cards, the manner of voting, calculation of voting results or seat allocation. At the same time the proposed solution does not change anything in terms of the mathematical consequences of the seat distribution among election committees, for in the current solution such allocation is also conducted as if one nationwide electoral district were in operation.

### **Mixed Electoral System**

Novel and without any counterpart in the Polish tradition is the idea of employing in Poland a mixed electoral system of a combined subtype that is currently being used in elections to parliaments of such German federated states as Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria<sup>7</sup>. The use of this system would make it possible to warrant the territorial representation for all voivodeships without the necessity of combining or dividing them. In such a way sixteen voivodeship districts would be created. A voter would cast a personal vote for one candidate from the list registered in a district (there would be no more than seven candidates on each list). Seats would be allocated proportionally among election committees at the national level – as it has been the case so far – on the basis of the number of votes won by all candidates from a given election committee in all voivodeships. However, the question of who will win the seats and consequently to which districts will they be allocated would be decided on the basis of the number of votes won by particular candidates. Seats would be obtained by these candidates who won the biggest number of votes in their respective districts (as in the plurality voting), except that each district (voivodeship) would have one seat guaranteed. This solution would advantage districts with a high political participation.

Such a system would, therefore, guarantee the proportional seat distribution among election committees at the national level while warranting the territorial representation at the level of voivodeships – a solution which is not possible under any other system. Due to these characteristics, the elec-

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<sup>7</sup> J. Flis, B. Michalak, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

toral system would realize as fully as possible the desideratum of “closeness” between the voters and MEPs. Additionally, it would maximally personalize and simplify the voter’s choice (voting for a specific person instead of voting for a party list). In actual fact, the system under consideration would be very similar to the current one, except for the fact that it would maximally simplify the voting. Its only drawback would consist in its lack of guarantees for the proportional seat allocation among electoral districts.

### **Single Transferable Vote (STV)**

This electoral variant would make it possible to maintain the current structure of electoral districts while at the same time allowing a fixed seat allocation among the electoral districts depending on the number of district inhabitants. The size of electoral districts would fluctuate from 3 to 6 seats. However, due to a specific mechanism, the system in question would allow for realization of the proportional seat distribution among political parties despite the small size of electoral districts. This system is also directly mentioned in the “Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage” as a variant of proportionality eligible for implementation<sup>8</sup>.

The application of the STV would mean the abandonment of party lists and introduction of the direct voting for candidates by rankings. The voter would additionally acquire the opportunity to fully express his political preferences with regard to as many candidates as there are in a given electoral district. Such a ranking could include all candidates taking part in elections what would decidedly reinforce a personal character of the political choice, eliciting thereby a higher respect and interest in elections among Polish citizens. This, in turn, can positively influence the turnout. Candidates in order to assure the electoral success would have to solicit not only for the support of their declared followers but also for the votes of the electorate of other candidates and parties. The higher in the rankings of the latter voters they would find themselves, the bigger would be their chance of winning a seat on

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<sup>8</sup> Article 1, Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2018/994 of 13 July 2018 amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Council Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom of 20 September 1976; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL-EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32018D0994&from=PL>

the basis of the consecutive preferences. The system in question would also solve the problem of the so-called lost votes. For votes originally cast for the candidates who already won the seats (or who were omitted in the procedure of the seat allocation due to their poor result) are transferred to other candidates in accordance with the number of second and consecutive preferences expressed for them on the cards of the already chosen (or eliminated) candidates. Hence, one can say that the STV realizes the principle of the territorial representation, desideratum of “closeness” between the voters and their representatives and personal – instead of party – character of elections. It does all these things while maintaining the proportional nature of elections and agreeing with the provisions of the European Union law.

However, the main drawback of the STV consists in the radical change of the manner of voting that it introduces. Instead of choosing one candidate from one list, a voter votes by ranking from 3 to 6 candidates from various election committees. Hence, application of the STV would require devising an entirely new system of calculating both votes and election results, acquiring a proper digital support for the procedure and training members of election commissions. Without such advancements the system would be difficult to use, prone to generate mistakes and considerably extending the process of calculating election results.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

The main drawback of the Polish electoral system to the European Parliament is its complexity, the unjust mechanism of the seat distribution among territorial electoral districts, the lack of fixed assignment of seats to districts and the fact that the number of seats depends on the distribution of votes among the winning election committees. This in turn leads to the disproportional, unjust and sometimes paradoxical seat distribution among electoral districts what in consequence causes inequalities in voting power of a single vote. The current model discriminates against the electoral districts with the smallest number of voters and favors the ones with the biggest number. The final effect is that the present electoral system is perceived as overcomplicated and unjust what can only fuel the demobilization of voters.

The alternatives to the current model mentioned in the present paper try to optimize various goals and criteria the fulfillment of which is usually and properly associated with the electoral systems and their functions. A choice of a given variant of the aforementioned alternatives should therefore be preceded by a choice of such criteria and above all of a preferred model of representation. Proportionality of the mechanism of translating votes into seats is the paramount goal imposed by the European Union law. All of the above-mentioned alternatives fulfill it, although in various ways and degrees. The most proportional is PR with 5 electoral districts (with St. Laguë method) whereas the most concentrated form of a party system is obtained by with 5 electoral districts (with d'Hondt method). If the subsidiary goal is to be maintaining the traditional model of territorial representation while having the highest proportionality of results, then the legislator should opt for the variant with five big electoral districts where 8 to 12 seats would be filled via the Sainte-Laguë method. A simulation of elections for 2019 results (see Chart 3) employing this method in five territorial districts shows that the result would be more proportional than if one nationwide electoral district with the d'Hondt method were used.

**Chart 3. Comparison of political consequences of various electoral systems**

Electoral system	IP	Gh	ENP	2PSC
Current system	90,58	6,01	2,31	0,92
PR with 5 electoral districts (d'Hondt)	86,73	8,18	2,16	0,96
PR with 5 electoral districts (St. Laguë)	90,87	5,52	2,40	0,90
PR with 1 nationwide district	90,58	6,01	2,31	0,92
Mixed electoral system	90,58	6,01	2,31	0,92

IP – index of proportionality; Gh – index of disproportionality by M. Gallagher; ENP – index of the effective; number of parties by M. Laakso & R. Taagepera; 2PSC – index two-party seat concentration which combined seat shares of the two strongest parties by D. Rae.

Source: author's own calculation based on the National Electoral Commission's data on the number of voters in the 2019 elections.

The three remaining alternative systems are also worth considering. The list proportional representation system with one nationwide electoral district and mixed electoral system with a combined subtype would generate exactly the same results as the current system, for the mechanism of translating votes into seats among election committees used in these systems is identical with the current one (at the national level). In turn the Single Transferable Vote system does not have any counterpart in Poland and could turn out to be cumbersome to use both by voters and vote counting staff. Besides, due to its distinct mechanics, it is difficult to predict what political consequences it could generate.

The mixed electoral system would be a solution fulfilling all the important goals (proportional mechanism of translating votes into seats, personal character of elections, territorial representation at the voivodeship level) and therefore the best one. In turn the system with one multi-member electoral district practically results in preserving the current electoral system while resigning from thirteen districts. It is therefore the most optimal and “politically safest” solution in Polish circumstances.

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