



Global Expertise. Local Solutions.  
Sustainable Democracy.

# **Elections in Serbia**

## *2016 Early Parliamentary Elections*

### Frequently Asked Questions

Europe and Eurasia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

2011 Crystal Drive, Arlington VA 22202 | [www.IFES.org](http://www.IFES.org)

April 22, 2016

## Table of Contents

Why is Serbia holding early elections? .....	1
What is at stake in these elections? .....	1
What is the electoral system in Serbia?.....	1
Who is eligible to vote in the elections? .....	2
What body will administer the vote? .....	2
When will the results be announced? .....	2
Is there a gender quota?.....	2
Will Kosovo Serbs be able to vote in the elections? .....	2

*Disclosure:*

*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Serbian election authorities as of April 22, 2016, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## Why is Serbia holding early elections?

Serbia was scheduled to hold parliamentary elections in March 2018. However, Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić called for snap elections on January 17, 2016 in preparation for negotiations on [Serbia's accession to the European Union](#).

Prime Minister Vučić has said he [hopes a new election will guarantee](#) “four more years of stability so that [Serbia] is ready to join the European Union.”

Parliamentary and local elections are scheduled for April 24, 2016. Local elections will be held in 17 municipalities in Belgrade, and Vojvodina will elect a new Assembly.

## What is at stake in these elections?

While the Serbian government is preparing for accession negotiations with the European Union, there is considerable dissatisfaction with the political system among the electorate. A [recent poll](#) conducted by the ProPositiv agency suggests that more than 5 percent of voters will deliberately spoil their ballots and cast blank votes in protest of a lack of real choice in the elections.

A similar phenomenon took place in the 2012 elections when more than 4 percent of the vote (around 170,000 votes) was considered spoiled during the counting process.

With the recent Hague Tribunal acquittal of Vojislav Seselj, the leader of the extreme right-wing Serbian Radical Party, [there is some concern](#) that the growing support for far-right politics and Seselj's party could destabilize Serbia.

## What is the electoral system in Serbia?

Serbia has a unicameral National Assembly, whose 250 members are elected in a single nationwide constituency using a list proportional representation system. The minimum threshold to win a seat is 5 percent of the total number of votes, except when a political party represents a coalition of ethnic minorities, in which case there is no threshold. Parliamentary seats are allocated in proportion to the number of votes won by each list, using the highest quotient system (known as the D'Hondt method<sup>1</sup>). If the quotient calculated for two or more electoral lists is the same, the [final seat is allocated to the list having received the largest number of votes](#) overall.

---

<sup>1</sup> The D'Hondt method is used to determine seat allocation in party-list proportional representation. The total votes cast for each party in the electoral district (in the case of Serbia, throughout the country) is divided iteratively, first by one, then by two, then by three, etc., until the maximum numbers calculated corresponds to the number of seats that need to be distributed.

## **Who is eligible to vote in the elections?**

In order to be eligible to vote, one must be at least 18 years old on Election Day and a Serbian citizen. There will be a total of [6,737,808 eligible voters](#) in this election.

Serbia's voter register – the Unified Voter Register – is maintained by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPA) and is [updated continuously](#) based on municipalities' records, state institutions' input, and requests from voters. From April 9 to April 22, the Election Commission updated the voter list on the basis of MPA decisions alone and a final updated voters list will be published in the Official Gazette. Voters cannot be added to the list [after April 22](#).

Serbia allows overseas voting under certain conditions. Overseas citizens of Serbia who have a permanent residence in Serbia and who are temporarily residing abroad are allowed to vote in person at Serbian diplomatic missions.

Polling stations will open at 7:00 a.m. in the morning and close at 8:00 p.m. in the evening on Election Day. Voters will need to bring a valid ID, passport or driver's license containing their personal identification number to the polling station in order to cast their vote.

## **What body will administer the vote?**

The elections will be administered by the Republic Electoral Commission. The Commission consists of a Chairperson and 16 members, who are appointed by the National Assembly for a period of four years.

## **When will the results be announced?**

The Republic Electoral Commission will publish the results within 96 hours from the moment voting ends. The results will be published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia.

## **Is there a gender quota?**

All candidate lists of political parties must include at least 30 percent of candidates of each sex. If a party list fails to meet this criteria, the Republic Election Commission can refuse to register the list. This quota also applies to local elections.

## **Will Kosovo Serbs be able to vote in the elections?**

As in previous Serbian elections, members of Serbian communities in Kosovo will be able to vote in these elections. Polling stations will be set up in Serbian majority areas in Kosovo. While the Kosovo government did not allow the Serbian Republic Election Commission to organize elections within the country, a

compromise was found in advance of the 2012 elections where the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo oversaw the vote. The OSCE Mission collected and distributed election materials to polling stations and handed them over to Serbian authorities once the polls were closed in 2012 and 2014.