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Comparative Study of Electoral Systems

Module 2: Macro Report

Version 2002-10-23

Country (Date of Election): Belgium 13 June 2003

NOTE TO THE COLLABORATORS: The information provided in this report contributes to an important part of the CSES project- your efforts in providing these data are greatly appreciated! Any supplementary documents that you can provide (i.e. electoral legislation, party manifestos, electoral commission reports, media reports) are also appreciated, and will be made available with this report to the CSES community on the CSES web page.

Part I: Data Pertinent to the Election at which the Module was Administered

1. Report the number of portfolios (cabinet posts) held by each party in cabinet, *prior* to the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all".)

| <u>Name of Political Party</u> | <u>Number of Portfolios</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| VLD | 4 |
| SP.a | 3 |
| Agalev | 2 |
| PS | 3 |
| MR | 3 |
| Ecolo | 2 |

1a. What was the size of the cabinet before the election?.....17.....

2. Report the number of portfolios (cabinet posts) held by each party in cabinet, *after* the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all").

| <u>Name of Political Party</u> | <u>Number of Portfolios</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| VLD | 5 |
| SP.a | 5 |
| Spirit | 1 |
| PS | 5 |
| MR | 4 |
| FDF | 1 |

2a. What was the size of the cabinet after the election?20.....

3. Political Parties (most active during the election in which the module was administered and receiving at least 3% of the vote):

| Party Name/Label | Year Party Founded | Ideological Family | European Parliament Political Group (where applicable) | International Party Organizational Memberships |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| A. | SEE TABLE 1 | | | |
| B. | | | | |
| C. | | | | |
| D. | | | | |
| E. | | | | |
| F. | | | | |

Ideological Party Families: (These are suggestions only. If a party does not fit well into this classification scheme, please provide an alternative and some explanation).

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Ecology Parties | Liberal Parties | Agrarian Parties |
| Communist Parties | Right Liberal Parties | Ethnic Parties |
| Socialist Parties | Christian Democratic Parties | Regional Parties |
| Social Democratic Parties | Conservative Parties | Other Parties |
| Left Liberal Parties | National Parties | Independents |
| | | Single Issue Parties |

The following lists provide examples of political groups and organizations that a particular party might belong to. Please report any and all international affiliations for each party.

European Parliament Political Groups:

European People's Party
European Democrats
Party of European Socialists
European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
Confederal Group of European United Left
Nordic Green Left
Greens
European Free Alliance
Europe for the Nations
Europe of Democracies and Diversities

International Party Organizations:

Asia Pacific Socialist Organization
Caribbean Democratic Union
Christian Democratic International
Christian Democratic Organization of America
Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
Democratic Union of Africa
Eastern European Social Democratic Forum
Green Movement
Humanist Party
International Communist Union
International Democrat Union
International League of Democratic Socialists
Liberal International
Natural Law Party
Pacific Democratic Union
Organization of African Liberal Parties
Socialist International
Socialist Inter-Africa

3a. Were there any significant parties not represented in parliament *before* the election?

NO

3b. Were there any significant parties not represented in parliament *after* the election?

AGALEV
NV-A

3c. Were there any other non-represented parties or independent actors whom you believe to have had a significant effect on the election?

NO

4a. Ideological Positions of Parties

Please indicate Parties A-F's positions on a left-right dimension (in the expert judgment of the CSES Collaborator). If this dimension is not appropriate, please provide an explanation of the salient cleavages, and parties' relative positions.

| Party Name | LEFT | | | | | | | | | | RIGHT | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|------|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| A. VLD | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B. CD&V | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C. NV-A | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D. Vlaams Blok | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E. SP.a | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| F. PS | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| G. MR | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H. CDH | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I. Ecolo | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| J. FDF | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

4aa. Do you believe there would be general consensus on these placements among informed observers in your country

No

4b. If you have asked respondents to rank political parties on an alternative dimension, other than the left-right dimension, please also provide your own rankings of the parties on this dimension.

Name of dimension:

.....

Label for left hand position:

Label for right hand position:

| Party Name | LEFT | RIGHT |
|------------|------------------------|-------|
| A. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| B. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| C. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| D. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| E. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |
| F. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | |

4bb. Do you believe there would be general consensus about these placements among informed observers in your country

5. In your view, what are the five most salient factors that affected the outcome of the election (e.g. major scandals; economic events; the presence of an independent actor; specific issues)?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

5a. Do you believe there would be general consensus about the importance of these factors among informed observers in your country?

6. Electoral Alliances:

Sometimes, electoral alliances are made at the constituency level as, for example, in Finland. Documenting who is allied with whom, and how, in each constituency is a large task and we do not expect you to do more than make some general reference to the existence of constituency-level alliances. Sometimes, electoral alliances are made at the national level -- these are the alliances that we would like you will identify. Information is sought on who is allied with whom and on the nature of the electoral alliance.

a) Were electoral alliances permitted during the election campaign?

No Yes ...X..... , and the following alliances were formed:

| <u>Alliance Name</u> | <u>Participant Parties</u> (please indicate dominant members '*') |
|----------------------------|---|
| Alliance 1: SP.a - Spirit. | SP.a* + Spirit |
| Alliance 2: MR | MR* + FDF |
| Alliance 3: | |
| Alliance 4: | |
| Alliance 5: | |

7. Party Leaders and Presidential Candidates

In legislative elections, please report the leader of each party.

In presidential elections, list presidential candidates and their parties. If candidates were endorsed by more than one party, please indicate this below.

| <u>Party of Candidate</u> | <u>Name of Party Leader or Presidential Candidate</u> |
|---------------------------|---|
| A. VLD | Karel De Gucht |
| B. CD&V | Stefaan De Clercq |
| C. NV-A | Geert Bourgeois |
| D. Vlaams Blok | Frank Van Hecke |
| E. SP.a | Steve Stevaert |
| F. PS | Elio Di Rupo |
| G. MR | Daniël Ducarme |
| H. CDH | Joëlle Milquet |
| I. Ecolo | De Feyt |
| J. FDF | Olivier Mangain |

Part II: Data on Electoral Institutions

If possible, please supplement this section with copies of the electoral law, voters' handbooks, electoral commission reports, and/or any other relevant materials.

A. QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Definitions: An electoral district is defined as a geographic area within which votes are counted and seats allocated. If a district cannot be partitioned into smaller districts within which votes are counted and seats allocated, it is called primary. If it can be partitioned into primary districts, and during the counting process there is some transfer of votes and/or seats from the primary districts to the larger district, then the larger district is called secondary. If a district can be partitioned into secondary districts (again with some transfer of votes and/or seats), it is called tertiary.

In some electoral systems, there are electoral districts that are geographically nested but not otherwise related for purposes of seat allocation. In Lithuania, for example, there are 71 single-member districts that operate under a majority runoff system, and also a single nationwide district that operates under proportional representation (the largest remainders method with the Hare quota). Neither votes nor seats from the single-member districts transfer to the nationwide district, however. The two processes are entirely independent (with voters having one vote in each district). In this case, the nationwide district, although it contains the 71 single-member districts, is not considered to be secondary. It is primary. One might say that there are two segments to the electoral system in such cases.

1. How many segments (as just defined) are there in the electoral system?

- 1 segment
- 2 segments
- more than 2

Please answer the following questions (questions 2 through 11) for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature:

2. How many primary electoral districts are there? 12

3. For each primary electoral district, how many members are elected from each district? (If district variation exists, answer 3a)

3a. If districts elect varying number of members, please list the districts, indicating the number of members elected from that district. (Attach separate sheets, as required).

| <u>District</u> | <u>Number of Members</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Provincie Antwerpen | 24 |
| Provincie Limburg | 12 |
| Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen | 20 |
| Provincie West-Vlaanderen | 16 |
| Provincie Namen | 6 |
| Provincie Luxemburg | 4 |
| Provincie Henegouwen | 19 |
| Provincie Luik | 15 |
| Provincie Waals Brabant | 5 |
| Kieskring Leuven | 7 |
| Kieskring Brussel-Halle-Vilvoorde | 22 |

4. How many secondary electoral districts are there? 0, with the exception of the primary districts Waals Brabant, Kieskring Leuven and Kieskring Brussel-Halle-Vilvoorde which form together a secondary district.

5. How many tertiary electoral districts are there? 0

B. QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTING.

6. Exactly how are votes cast by voters? They can vote for a list and/or for 1 or more preference votes within one list (with maximum of M votes, where M is district magnitude)

6a. How many votes do they or can they cast? 1 for a list and/or 1 till M preference votes within one list.

6b. Do they vote for candidates, for lists, or for both? Both.

7. Are the votes transferable?

8. If more than one vote can be cast, can they be cumulated? No

9. Are there any other features of voting that should be noted?

Voting is compulsory in Belgium

C. QUESTIONS ABOUT CONVERTING VOTES INTO SEATS.

10) Exactly how are votes converted into seats?

D'Hondt Method

10a) Are there legally mandated thresholds that a party must exceed before it is eligible to receive seats? Yes If so, what is the threshold? 5%

10b) What electoral formula or formulas are used?

D'Hondt method

11) If there are lists, are they closed, open, or flexible? please code below

- a.) closed?
- b) flexible, but in practice virtually closed?
- c) **flexible**
- d) flexible, but in practice virtually open? or
- e) open?

Definitions: A list is closed if the seats that are awarded to that list are always occupied by the candidates in order of their appearance on the list (i.e., if the list gets x seats then necessarily the top x names on the list get the seats). A list is open if the question of which candidates on the list get the seats that are awarded to the list is determined solely by the votes that each candidate receives. A list is flexible if parties place their candidates in the order they would like to see them elected, but voters can, with varying degrees of ease, change this order through votes they cast for individual candidates.

Please repeat questions 2 through 11 of this section for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature.

D. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF ELECTORAL ALLIANCE.

Definitions: A joint list refers to one on which candidates of different parties run together. Apparentement refers to a legal agreement between two or more lists to pool their votes for the purposes of an initial seat allocation, with seats initially allocated to the alliance then reallocated to the lists in the alliance.

12) What are the possibilities of alliance in the system?

12a. Can parties run joint lists? Yes

12b. Is there apparentement or linking of lists? Yes but since electoral reform of 2003 only in secondary district Brussel-Halle-Vilvoorde-Leuven-Waals Brabant

12c. Can candidates run with the endorsement of more than one party? No

12d. Do parties withdraw their lists or candidates in some constituencies, urging their supporters there to vote for an ally's list or candidate? No

12e. Other?

13. Are joint lists possible? Yes

13a. If joint lists are possible, are they subject to different regulations than single-party lists?
For example, higher thresholds, different numbers of candidates that may appear on the list, etc.

NO

14. If appurement is possible, what lists can participate in such agreements:
lists of the same party in the same constituency?
lists of the same party from different constituencies? X
lists of different parties in the same constituency?

15) If candidates can run with the endorsement of more than one party, is this reflected on the ballot?

..... No.

..... No party endorsements are indicated on the ballot paper

..... Yes, candidate s name appears once, together with the names of all supporting parties

..... Yes, candidate s name appears as many times as there are different parties endorsing him or her, each time with the name of the endorsing party

..... Yes, other (please explain)

Part III: Data on Regime Type

Below are various questions about the type of regime--presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential--in your country. There are two potential problems with these questions that should be noted at the outset. First, in some countries there may be a discrepancy between the *de jure* (or legal) situation and the *de facto* (or practical) situation. For example, in Great Britain the Queen still possesses a legal right to veto legislation, but this right has not been exercised since 1707. In the case of such obviously obsolete powers, please answer according to the *de facto* situation. Otherwise, describe the *de jure* situation. A second potential problem is that the questions may not be phrased optimally for the situation in your particular country. In such cases, please answer as best you can, providing some indication of the difficulties as you see them.

A. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE HEAD OF STATE.

Definitions: The Head of State is typically the highest ranking official in the executive branch of government. Often, this position is held by a president or a monarch, and may be more ceremonial than effective. The Head of Government is usually the highest ranking official in the legislative branch of government. In some systems, this may be someone other than the Head of State (i.e. the prime minister in the Westminster systems), while in other cases, the roles of the Head of State and Head of Government are combined (i.e. in the United States, the president serves as both the Head of State and the Head of Government).

1. Who is the Head of State?

..... President

X Monarch

..... Prime Minister serves as ceremonial head of state

..... Other (please specify)

2. How is the head of state selected?

..... Direct election

..... Indirect election

X Birth right

..... Divine right

..... Other (Explain)

2a. If by direct election, by what process?

..... Plurality election

..... Run-off or two-ballot system

..... Other (Explain)

If by run-off system, how are the candidates selected for the final round?

..... The (#) candidates with the highest vote totals advance to the second round

..... Any candidate with at least% of the popular vote advances to the second round

2b. If by indirect election, by what process?

- Electoral college
- Selection by the legislature
- Other (Explain)

If by electoral college, how are electors chosen?.....

.....
..

Does the electoral college deliberate? Yes No

What is the voting procedure used by the electoral college?

If by the legislature, by which chamber(s) of the legislature? What is the voting procedure used?

3. Does the Head of State have the following powers? [Check all that apply.]

3a. Introduce legislation? No

3b. Require expedited action on specific legislation? (i.e., set a deadline by which the legislature is required to act on the bill)? No

Definitions: A Head of State possesses a partial veto when he or she can target specific clauses of a piece of legislation for veto, while promulgating the rest. In the U.S., such vetoes are sometimes called line item vetoes. A Head of State possesses a package veto when he or she can veto the entire piece of legislation submitted by the legislature, but cannot veto some parts and accept others.

3c. Package veto? No

3d. Partial veto? No

3e. Issue decrees with the power of law? No

3f. Emergency powers? No

3g. Negotiate treaties and international agreements? No

- 3h. Commander of the armed forces? Yes
- 3j. Initiate referenda or plebiscites? No
- 3k. Refer legislation to the judicial branch for review of constitutionality? No
- 3m. Convene special legislative sessions? No

B. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT.

Definitions: In some countries, the Head of Government is directly elected, in elections that may or may not occur concurrently with legislative elections. In these cases, the Head of Government is said to be elected independently of the legislature. In others, the Head of Government is the leader of the governing party or governing coalition in the legislature, and so, the selection of the Head of Government depends upon the distribution of seats in the legislature. In these cases, the Head of Government is not elected independently of the legislature.

1. Is the Head of Government elected independently of the legislature? No

1a. Is the Head of Government also the Head of State? No

1b. If the Head of Government is not elected independently of the legislature, how is the Head of Government selected?

..... Appointed by the head of state alone

..... Appointed by the legislature alone

X Nominated by the head of state, and approved by the legislature

..... Nominated by the legislature, and approved by the head of state

..... Other (Explain):

2. What authorities does the Head of Government have over the composition of the cabinet?
[Check all that apply.]

..... Names ministers and assigns portfolios alone

..... Nominates ministers for approval by the president

..... Reviews and approves ministerial nominations made by the president

..... Dismisses ministers and reassigns portfolios at own discretion

X..... Other (Explain): No real authorities, but he's the negotiator of the cabinet

3. What authorities does the Head of Government have over the policy making process?
[Check all that apply.]

X Chairs cabinet meetings

..... Determines schedule of issues to be considered by the legislature

..... Determines which alternatives will be voted on by the legislature, and in which order

..... Refers legislative proposals to party or legislative committees

- Calls votes of confidence in government
- Other (Explain):

C. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CABINET

1. By what method(s) can the cabinet be dismissed? [Check all that apply.]
 - By the head of state **acting** alone
 - By the prime minister **acting** alone
 - By majority vote of the legislature where a majority of all legislators is required
 - By majority vote of the legislature where a majority of those legislators voting is required
 - X By some combination of the above, acting in concert (Explain)
 - Government can resign on the prime ministers' initiative and must be ratified by the king
 - Other (Explain):

D. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LEGISLATURE

1. Can the legislature be dissolved prior to regularly scheduled elections? Yes,
 - By the head of state **acting** alone
 - By the prime minister **acting** alone
 - By majority vote of the legislature
 - X By some combination of the above, acting in concert (Explain):
 - Government can resign on the prime ministers' initiative and must be ratified by the king. New elections can be called by the government.
 - Other (Explain):

2. If the legislature can be dissolved prior to regularly scheduled elections, are there restrictions on when and how the legislature can be dissolved?
[Check all that apply.]
 -On the timing of dissolution (e.g. not within one year after a legislative election) (Explain)

 -As a response to action/inaction by the legislature (e.g. only when the legislature has censured the cabinet; only if the legislature fails to pass the budget) (Explain)

 - ..X..... Other (Explain): no restrictions

3. Is there a second chamber of the legislature? Yes, it is:
 - X directly elected
 - X indirectly elected through the following process

- 3a. If there is a second chamber and it is indirectly elected, are those who choose its members:
..... wholly regional and/or local officials?
X partly regional and/or local officials?
..... not necessarily regional and/or local officials?

The members of the Flemish Parlement and the *Parlement de la Communauté Française* appoint among each of them 10 senators to hold an extra seat in the Senate. The *Rat der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft* appoint one member among their members. So, 21 extra seats are distributed in the Senate among members of the Flemish Parlement and the *Parlement de la Communauté Française* and *Rat der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft*

The directly elected senators together with the appointed members by the regional parlement co-opt 10 extra senators (6 flemish and 4 french speaking)

- 3b. If there is a second chamber, does it have specific and exclusive legislative powers (i.e. the power to reject the executive's proposed budget)? No

- 3c. If there is a second chamber, does it have the power to remove the cabinet or censure its ministers? No

E. FEDERALISM

1. Is there a constitutionally guaranteed division of power between the central government and regional and/or local governments? Yes
2. Does the central government have the power to remove elected officials of regional and/or local governments? Yes

Senate

Please answer the following questions (questions 2 through 11) for each segment of each directly elected house of the legislature:

2. How many primary electoral districts are there? 2

3. For each primary electoral district, how many members are elected from each district? (If district variation exists, answer 3a)

3a. If districts elect varying number of members, please list the districts, indicating the number of members elected from that district. (Attach separate sheets, as required).

| <u>District</u> | <u>Number of Members</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Flemish Language Group | 25 |
| French speaking Language Group | 15 |

4. How many secondary electoral districts are there? 0

5. How many tertiary electoral districts are there? 0

B. QUESTIONS ABOUT VOTING.

6. Exactly how are votes cast by voters? They can vote for a list and/or 1 or more preference votes within one list (with maximum of M votes, where M is district magnitude)

6a. How many votes do they or can they cast? 1 for a list and/or 1 till M preference votes within one list.

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Senate

10a) Are there legally mandated thresholds that a party must exceed before it is eligible to receive seats? Yes If so, what is the threshold? 5%

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F. REFERENCES

Please list any resources that were consulted in the preparation of this report, or that the CSES community may find especially helpful in understanding the political system described here.

Swyngedouw, M., Billiet, J., Goeminne, B., Dewinter, L., Frognier A-P., Baudewyns, P., Berck A-S., "ISPO-PIOP 2003 General Election Study Belgium. Codeboek: Questios and Frequency tables" Leuven/ Louvain-la Neuve, 2004

Vander Weyden, P.. D'Hondt and Alternative D'Hondt for Two-Tier Districting Systems. The Belgian Electoral System'. IPSoM-Bulletin 2001/5, Brussels.

Vander Weyden, P. Het Belgische Kiessysteem: de klassieke en alternatieve methode D'Hondt. Res Publica, VolXLIII ,2001(4), 595-616.