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Voter Turnout

"We are grateful to International IDEA's staff and website for helping us to organize and clarify the facts and fallacies surrounding international voter turnout. It is a needed resource for understanding worldwide voting behavior.

We couldn't have done it as well without the help of International IDEA."

*Christian Science Monitor
October 2000*

What is International IDEA?

International IDEA (the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) nurtures, sustains and promotes democracy around the world. Global in membership and scope, independent of specific national interests, and flexible and quick in its responses, it is an intergovernmental organization with a unique mandate – to support the growth of genuine, sustainable democracy. Visit us at: www.idea.int



A global collection of voter turnout statistics for all elections since 1945.

VOTER TURNOUT

What is the Voter Turnout Project?

The Voter Turnout Project contains the most comprehensive collection of voter turnout statistics in the world, covering all democratic elections held since 1945. The information is available on International IDEA's website (www.idea.int) as well as in reports published biennially. Since its launch in 1996, it has become the authoritative source for turnout statistics. The project also contains specially commissioned analyses of voter turnout rates and political participation, regional and country case studies, and comparative articles on relevant topics, such as voter registration.

Why do we need Voter Turnout?

World-wide concern about trends in diminishing political participation has led to an increasing demand for accessible and authoritative statistics. In addition, both electoral practitioners and academics as well as the media use such data to examine trends across electoral systems and procedures.

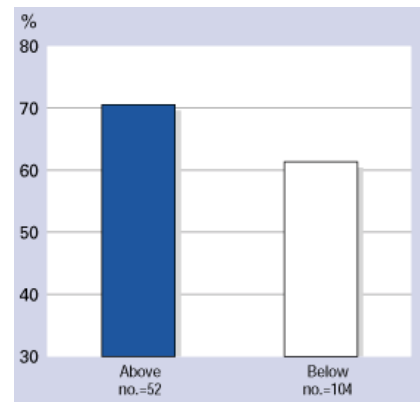
What can you find in the Voter Turnout project?

The core of the Voter Turnout Project is a continuously updated collection of participation statistics and results. The collection details participation at each election, both parliamentary and presidential, since 1945. Number of registered voters, total number of votes cast, share of invalid and blank votes and the number of votes for the winning party or candidate are all provided. In addition, the project presents regional comparisons of turnout, as well as tables ranking turnout by region, and globally, in the 1990s and since 1945. Written analyses and country case studies accompany the statistics as well as opinion columns and ground-breaking articles.

Did you know?

- That one democratic election took place in Central & Eastern Europe in the 1980's, but 113 in the 1990s?
- That the average voter turnout in Asia in the 1990s is 77.5%?
- That Mali is the country in the world with the consistently lowest turnout, with average participation of only a little more than 20%?
- That Australia, Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Nauru, Singapore and Uruguay practice compulsory voting and impose sanctions on non-voters?
- That 34 countries in the world have compulsory voting laws?
- That 1,617 democratic elections took place between 1945 and 2000?
- That only one country out of 14 has presidential elections in the Pacific region.
- That there have been more than 30% invalid and blank votes at some parliamentary elections in Ecuador?

Turnout for countries with literacy above and below 95%



Key: VAP = voting age population
no. = number of elections

Where is Voter Turnout available?

Voter Turnout is available both electronically on International IDEA's Voter Turnout website at www.idea.int/turnout and in a book version available from International IDEA. The website contains the most updated, accurate information which can always be accessed, while the reports are published biennially, and form an indispensable reference collection. To order your copy, visit our website.

Who uses Voter Turnout?

The information provided on the Voter Turnout website and in the Voter Turnout Reports is mainly used by academics, media, election administrators and the public. Newspaper articles, academic reports and development reports, for example, often refer to the statistics for comparisons between countries, regions or between two or more elections. A number of major publications such as Foreign Policy and the Christian Science Monitor have used the Voter Turnout Project for data.

The most reliable source

International IDEA collects the data from the Electoral Management Bodies in each country to ensure the reliability of its information. Additional information is collected from reliable secondary sources and acknowledged experts in this field.