**PRESS RELEASE**

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**2018 New Year Resolution:**

**“No more ‘yes-or-no?’ votes, lest the populists say ‘no’ to everything… until there is nothing.”**

**Majority Voting is Inaccurate…**

Brexit: in, eg, a four-option debate – eu, eea, cu or wto? – you *cannot* identify the will of the people with a majority vote on just one option: “in the eu, yes or no?” This is not least because you cannot find the collective will – what the people *want* – if some of them, 52%, say only what they *don’t* want.

Catalonia: yet the first person to propose preferential voting, Ramón Llull in 1199, was a Catalan.

And “all the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a referendum,” (*Oslobodjenje*, 7.2.1999).

**…so Majority Rule is Inadequate**

Majority Rule means that, in days gone by, Northern Ireland Catholics were, and today Turkey’s Kurds or Israel’s Arabs are, almost permanently excluded from power. *Ipso facto*, extremist parties such as the dup or Jewish Home can ‘wag the dog’ and, like the fpö in Austria, share power.

Secondly, majority rule was/is part of the problem in the Balkans, Rwanda, Kenya, Ukraine and throughout the Middle East. It is what we in the West advocate… until it goes wrong… when we suggest the very opposite: all-party power-sharing.

Yet we still believe in it. Even though it doesn’t work very well, anywhere. Trump. While in Europe, Germany is struggling to form a majority coalition; the Netherlands took 225 days to do it last year; Spain 313 in 2016; and Belgium in 2010/11, 451 days – a world record. Another ‘best/worst ever’ is held by India: in 1998, a coalition of 41 different parties! Majority rule can be like a lottery.

**Non-Majoritarian Preferential Voting, the Basis of…**

In a pluralist democracy, contentious problems should allow everything to be not only ‘on the table’ but also, in a short list perhaps, on the ballot paper. Let the mps in parliament or the people in referendums cast their preferences on, say, four options. At best, the winning option is the option with the highest average preference; and an average, of course, involves everyone who votes, not just a majority of them. The maximum, the best possible score would be 1.0; with four options, the lowest score would be everyone’s last preference, 4.0; and the mean would be 2.5. A winning option with from 1.0 – 1.6 could be the will of the people; from 1.6 – 2.2, the winner could be just the best possible compromise; but if only 2.4, then obviously the other options would also be close to the mean, so there would be no consensus; so no decision should yet be taken and the debate should be resumed.

**… All-party Power-sharing**

The people elect the parliament, ideally by a preferential and proportional system; next, the parliament elects an all-party coalition cabinet by an equally sophisticated matrix vote; and then, on options finalised by independent referees, decisions in parliament and/or referendums shall be taken in preferential votes, usually on 4 – 6 options, by a Modified Borda Count, mbc.

Peter Emerson, who, at the invitation of the late Zurab Zhvania, mp, gave a press conference on the above in Tbilisi in 1990. He is currently again in the Caucasus which, like the Balkans, has also suffered from binary referendums.

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