**PRESS RELEASE**

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**MINORITY ADMINISTRATION**

**OR**

**MAJORITY COALITION?**

**THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE?**

Everything will be subject to a vote of confidence, a binary vote, yes or no. If, however, there is not only an ‘anti-this’ majority but also an ‘anti-that’ majority, there will be *impasse*. As in Austria in 1999, it took 124 days to form a government; in the Netherlands in 2010, 127; in Belgium in 2011, 541 days; and so on.

The two-option majority vote is the most inaccurate measure of collective opinion ever invented. (When the House of Lords debated reform in 2003, they had five options. They took five majority votes. “Daft,” said Lord Meghnad Desai. They lost the lot! *Impasse*.)

In order to identify the will of a multi-party parliament, a more accurate measure is required: a multi-option preference vote.

The mathematics of parliament on May 8th may suggest a number of possible governments:

* a loose minority administration;
* a minority coalition;
* a single party or minority coalition with a ‘confidence and supply’ partner;
* a majority coalition;
* a grand coalition;
* an all-party coalition.

The democratic process should not be subject to talks behind closed doors, with pacts and murky deals etc., prior to the (by then predictable) formality of a majority vote in parliament.

In private talks if need be, the parties should formulate each definite proposal – as per a German-style *constructive* vote of no confidence. Next, a debate and a multi-option preference vote should be the (unpredictable) decision-making process! The option with the highest average preference would best reflect “the will of parliament”.\*

\* (If but the first-past-the-post electoral system were fair), the latter could approximate to “the will of the people”.

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