**PRESS RELEASE**

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**SINGLE-PREFERENCE VOTING PROCEDURES FAVOUR THE EXTREMISTS**

**ELECTIONS**

The Euro elections are likely to see increased support for parties of the far right… partly because of the simplistic electoral system. In Britain (though not in NI), closed PR-list allows the voter to cast one preference for one party only. It is simplistic, Orwellian even – ‘this’ good, ‘that/those’ bad – and inaccurate… (while FPTP is even worse).

NI’s preference voting, PR-STV, allows voters to express more accurate opinions. And most NI elections do indeed reflect the nature of NI society – all except the FPTP Westminster elections, which always produce a hopelessly inaccurate outcome.

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|  | % of councilors, 2019, PR-STV | % of MPs, 2017, FPTP |
| DUP | 26 % | 56 % |
| SF | 23 % | 39 % |
| UUP | 16 % |  5 %  |
| SDLP | 13 % | 0 |
| Alliance | 11 % | 0 |
| GP |  2 %  | 0 |

In any single-preference voting procedure, PR-list or FPTP, the vote of every individual is inaccurate; therefore the outcome overall will also be inaccurate, i.e., unfair. And just as FPTP does not and cannot reflect the diversity of NI society, so too, PR-list will not give an accurate reflection of British society. When the very survival of our species depends on our elected representatives taking some really serious decisions, we must have just and accurate voting procedures.

Yet again, the need for preferential voting, both in elections ***and in decision-making***, is self-evident.

**DECISION-MAKING**

To identify the *collective* will of parliament or of the electorate, we need the MPs’ or voters’ *individual* opinions. By definition, therefore, not least because some people may say not what they want but only what they *don’t* want, an “Option X, ‘yes’ or ‘no’?” vote cannot identify a collective will. So, in a pluralist democracy, everything should be ‘on the table’, and (a short list of) everything should also be on the ballot… just as it was in New Zealand’s five-option referendum of 1992.

We would not want a North Korean type of election, “Candidate X, yes-or-no?” Why, then, do we tolerate binary ballots in decision-making, in parliament or referendum, “Option X, yes-or-no?”

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