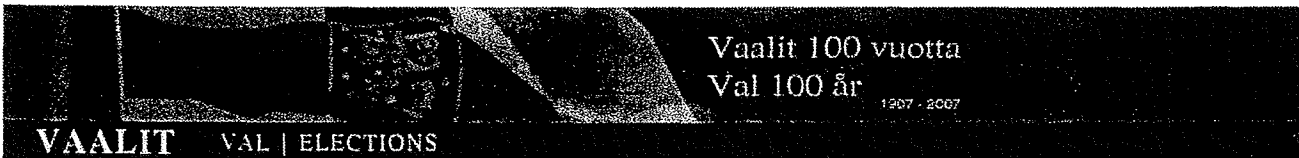


# Finnish Election System

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## Finnish Election System Basic Elements

## General Elections in Finland

- Parliamentary elections
  - every 4th year, next in 2011
- Presidential elections
  - every 6th year, next in 2012
- Municipal elections
  - every 4th year, next in October 2008
- European elections
  - every 5th year, next in June 2009

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## Referendums

- Consultative national referendums
  - based on a separate law
  - only two times: 1931 (Prohibition act) and 1994 (Joining the EU)
- Consultative municipal referendums
  - defined by the council of municipality
  - As of 1991: 45 referendums
  - most common issue: Merging two municipalities into one

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## Election history

- The Election Act of the Grand Duchy of Finland 1906
  - universal and equal voting right and right to stand as a candidate
  - full political rights to women (3rd country in the world and 1st in Europe)
  - 200 MP's
  - Proportionality, d'Hondt -system
- First parliamentary elections 1907

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## Some numbers ...

- Population: 5,3 million
- Number of people entitled to vote: 4,3 million
- Constituencies: 15
- Municipalities: 416
- Candidates (approximately):
  - Parliamentary elections: 2000
  - Presidential elections: 7-10
  - Municipal elections: 40 000
  - European elections: 200

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## Electoral legislation

- Constitution (731/1999)
  - Voting right, eligibility and other basic principles
- Election Act (714/1998)
  - Amendment (880/2006): e-voting pilot in municipal elections in October 2008
- Act on Political Parties (10/1969)
- Act on Disclosure of Election Financing (414/2000)

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## Basic Principles

- Elections are direct, proportional and secret
- Voting right is equal
- Voting is personal and takes place in front of election authorities
  - voting by mail (remote voting) or voting by proxy are not allowed in any form
- Combination of voting for an individual candidate and a party

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## Right to vote

- Parliamentary and Presidential elections:
  - Finnish citizens over 18 years of age
- European elections:
  - Finnish citizens over 18 years of age; and
  - citizens of other EU-member states over 18 years of age who have registered themselves into the voting register of Finland
- Municipal elections:
  - citizens of Finland, other EU-member states, as well as Norway and Iceland, who are over 18 years of age and who have municipality of residence in Finland; and
  - citizens of other states, who are over 18 years of age and who have had municipality of residence in Finland during two years

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## Right to stand as a candidate

- Eligible are all those who are entitled to vote
  - Not: those who are under guardianship
  - Not: professional soldiers
- Not eligible (incompabilities)
  - for example: chancellor of justice, members of the supreme court, parliamentary ombudsman

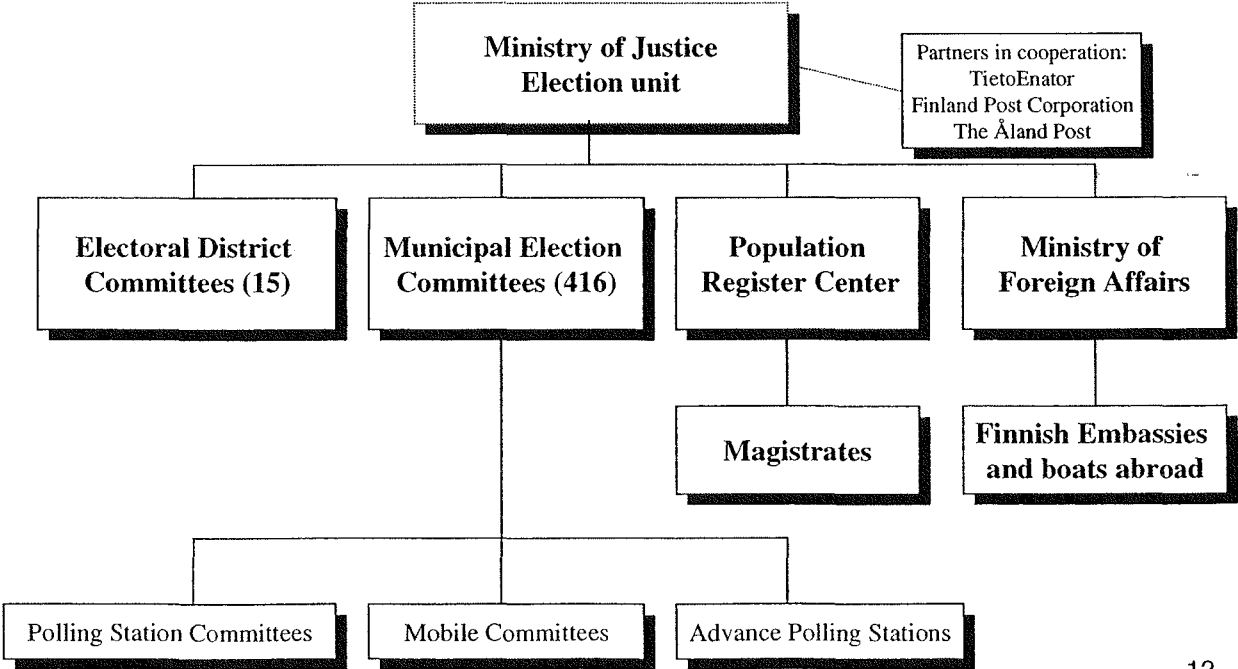
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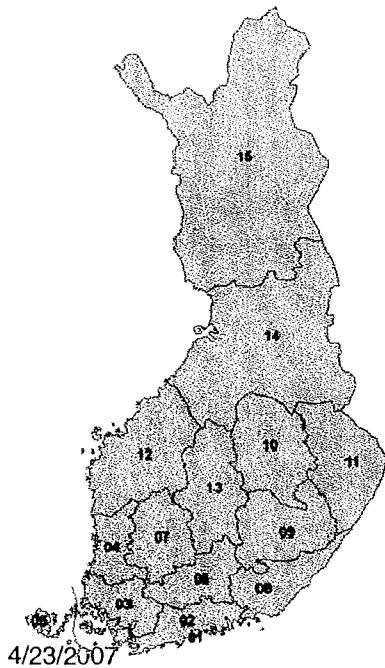
# Finnish Election System

## Organising the Elections

### Election authorities



## Constituencies



Number of the seats from constituencies, in parliamentary elections of 2007:

1. Helsinki 21
  2. Uusimaa 34
  3. Varsinais-Suomi 17
  4. Satakunta 9
  5. Åland Island 1
  6. Häme 14
  7. Pirkanmaa 18
  8. Kymi 12
  9. Etelä-Savo 6
  10. Pohjois-Savo 10
  11. Pohjois-Karjala 6
  12. Vaasa 17
  13. Keski-Suomi 10
  14. Oulu 18
  15. Lappi 7
- Total: 200

## Finnish Election System

### Voting

## Advance voting

- A voter may vote either: 1) in advance or 2) on election day
- Advance voting period
  - In Finland: seven (7) days from 11th to 5th day before election day
  - Abroad: Four (4) days from 11th to 8th day before election day
- General Advance Polling Stations
  - Voter can vote at any of the advance polling station
  - Post-offices, municipality offices, libraries and other places determined by the municipality (862 stations in parliamentary elections 2007)
  - Abroad: Finnish embassies and consulates (233 stations)

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## Voting on the election day

- Election day is Sunday, voting begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 8 p.m.
- On election day voter can vote only at his/her own polling station
- 2611 polling stations in parliamentary elections 2007

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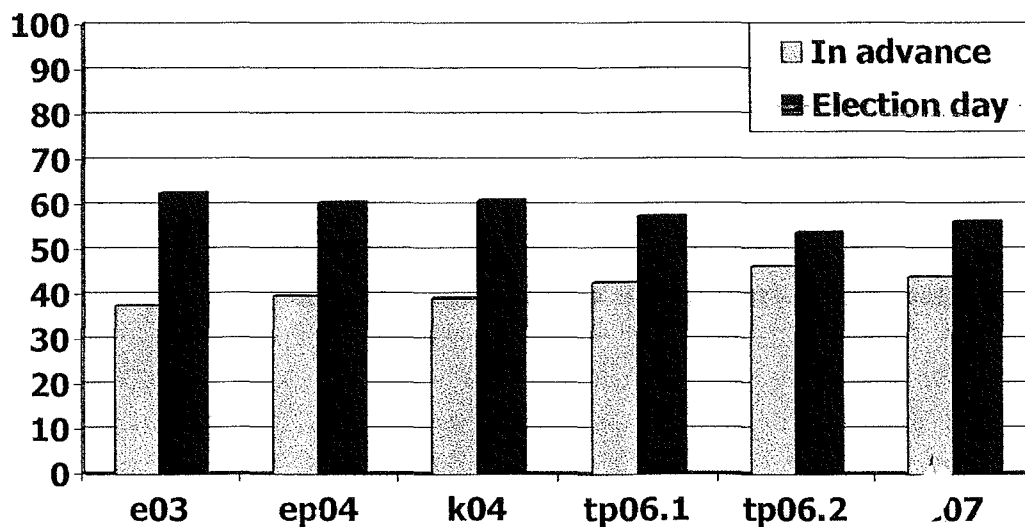
## Latest turnouts

- Parliamentary elections 2007: 67,9 %
  - Presidential elections 2006: 77,2 %
  - Municipal elections 2004: 58,6 %
  - European elections 2004: 41,1 %
  - Parliamentary elections 2003: 69,7 %
- 
- Highest turnout ever: Presidential elections 1982 (86,8 %)
  - Lowest turnout ever: European elections 1999 (31,4 %)

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## Voting habits



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## Presidential election in January 2006

- Eight candidates, one of them was nominated by a constituency association
- President Halonen, the candidate of the Social Democratic Party, was re-elected President
- Her support was 3.6 percentage points higher than that for the runner-up Mr Niinistö, the candidate of the National Coalition Party
- The second round voting turnout was 77.2 per cent

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## Parliamentary elections 2007

- Altogether 2004 candidates were nominated.
- The average age of all candidates was 46.4 years.
- 18 registered parties participated in the elections.
- Approximately two-thirds of the candidates were nominated by eight parliamentary parties.
- The number of candidates from constituency associations was 21.

Source: Election Statistics, Parliamentary election 2007. Statistics Finland

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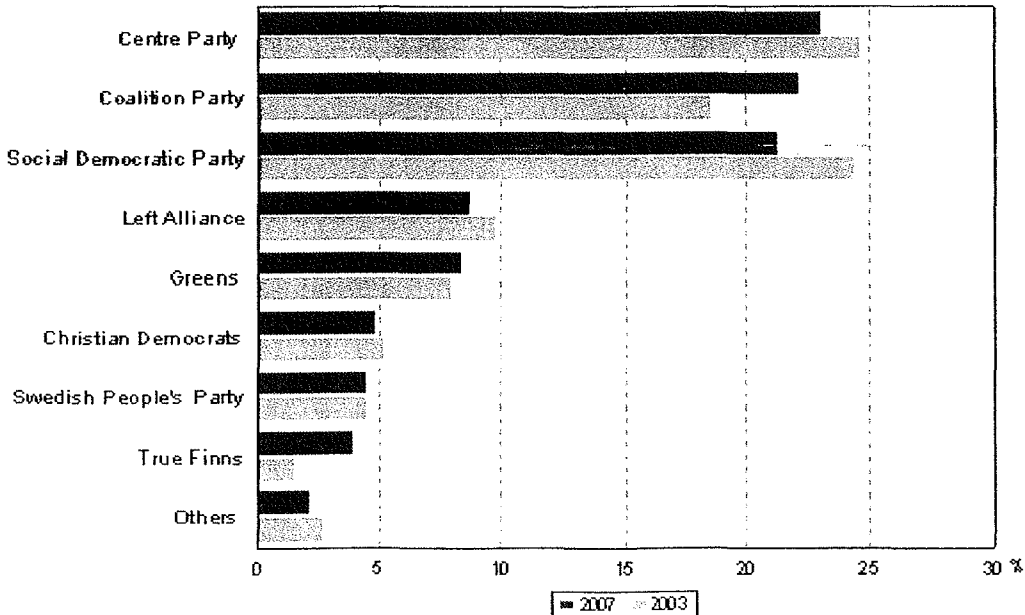
## Parliamentary elections 2007

- The voting turnout was lower than in the previous elections.
- The three major parties were supported evenly:
  - The Center Party kept its position as the biggest party, it got 23.1 per cent of all votes cast (51 seats in the Parliament).
  - The Coalition Party was the biggest winner, increasing its support by 3.7 percentage points and received 22.3 per cent of all votes in the country (50 seats in the Parliament).
  - The Social Democrats got 21.4 per cent of the votes, and lost support by 3.0 percentage points (45 seats in the Parliament).
- The proportion of women
  - of persons entitled to vote was 52,1 %,
  - of candidates 39,9 %, and
  - of elected MPs 42,0 %

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## Parliamentary elections 2007



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Source: Statistics Finland

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## Finnish Election System

# Election Information System

## Election Information System (EIS)

- ADP elections started 1990 (some basic calculation operations earlier)
- EIS contains 6 subsystems
  1. Basic Data (electoral districts, municipalities, voting districts, election authorities etc. ...)
  2. The polling station register (the advance polling places and the election day polling stations)
  3. Franchise data (Voting register; data is collected from Population Information System)
  4. Candidate register
  5. Centralised calculation system of cast votes
  6. Statistics and information services, results publishing etc...(internet, data transfer to mass media companies etc.)

## Voting register

- The Population Register Centre compiles a computer register of everyone entitled to vote (voting register)
- The voting register contains information on the voters (name, identity code, electoral district, municipality of residence, and polling station) as this information appears in the Population Information System 51 days before election day
- The period of display for public inspection is from 41 days before the election day onwards
- Claims for correction of the register have to be submitted to the civic administration not later than 16 days before Election day
- The voting register becomes legally valid at noon 12 days before election day
- Every person in the voting register is sent a notice of his or her right to vote (card of information) not later than 24 days before election day

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## e-Voting

- A pilot will be carried out in three municipalities in the constituency of Uusimaa in the municipal elections in October 2008
- According to the new government programme, if the pilot proves to be a success our goal is to move on to e-voting gradually in the whole country by the year 2015.
- eVoting is going to be an alternative both in the advance voting and when voting on election day, but only at polling stations
- Why e-Voting?
  - to facilitate the election arrangements
  - to achieve some cost savings
  - to prevent human errors
  - to make it easier to vote
  - to speed up the counting a little

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Thank you for your interest!

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