



# Croatia's Parliamentary Elections

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*This report is part of a series of reports by NDI/Croatia on the November 23 parliamentary elections.*

## Political Parties

Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Croatian Peasant's Party (HSS), Croatian People's Party (HNS), Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs), Democratic Center (DC), Istrian Democratic Congress (IDS), Liberal Party (LS), Party of Liberal Democrats (Libra), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Croatian Party of Rights (HSP), Croatian Bloc (HB), Croatian Party of Pensioners (HSU), Croatian Democratic Peasant's Party (HDSS), Croatian True Renaissance (HIP), Croatian Christian Democrat Party (HKDU), Croatian Independent Democrats (HND).

## HDZ Tops the Polls

HDZ has surprised many with a stronger than expected result on Election Day. As for the elections themselves, the State Electoral Commission (SEC) and GONG, a nonpartisan citizens' organization, called the elections orderly and regular. This marks an important step in Croatia's democratic transition.

Voter turnout was 66%--a 9% drop from 1999. Importantly, 26% of votes went to parties failing to pass the threshold--a 15% increase from 1999.

**HSP**—A right-wing party never before in government, HSP possesses a strong individuality and is unlikely to compromise.

**HSS**—Leader and former parliamentary speaker Zlatko Tomcic has been purportedly urged by the European's Peoples Party and others to enter into a coalition with HDZ. His public aspiration is to become prime minister.

**SDSS**—SDSS captured all three ethnic Serb minority seats in these elections. The party leader, Vojislav Stanimirovic, has stated that SDSS would consider entering a coalition with HDZ.

The split between the SDP and HDZ has simplified the political landscape in Croatia with leaders of four smaller parties failing to win seats (Drazen Budisa, HSLs; Mate Granic, DC; Ivic Pasalic, Croatian Bloc; Miroslav Tudjman, HIP). Four smaller parties failed to pass the threshold (HIP, HKDU, HND, HB).

The New Parliament Seats by Party		
	Prior	Projected
HDZ	33	66
SDP/Libra/Libra/LS	60	43
HSS	15	9
HNS/PGS/SBHS	5	11
HSLs	14	2
DC	3	1
HSP	4	8
HB	5	0
HSU	0	3
HDSS	0	1
HIP	3	0
HKDU	1	0
HND	1	0
Independents	2	0
Minorities	5	8
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>152</b>

## Surprises

- The HSU won 3 seats and almost won 3 others.
- The HDZ successfully held its vote together notwithstanding two splinter parties (HIP and DC).
- The HDZ won almost 50% of the vote in Dalmatia.

## Disappointments

- Expected to win 20 seats, HNS has a projected 11 seats and failed the threshold in one district.
- The SDP has lost a projected 10 seats.
- The number of women in parliament has dropped from 23% to 17%.

## Timeline

The formation of the next government will formally occur within a 30-day period following the new parliament's first sitting, likely to occur in December. SDP has accepted the preliminary results and is prepared to lead the opposition. The initiative to form a new government is likely to begin with HDZ. HDZ's potential partners in the next government include: