

System of proportional representation in the Czech Republic and its critique

Abstract

The diploma thesis „System of proportional representation in the Czech Republic and its critique“ deals with the proportional representation in the Czech Republic, particularly its most criticized aspects. The purpose of this paper is to analyse this system, its characteristics, forms and reforms under the Czech conditions.

The first chapter defines proportional representation and describes its constituent elements – a legal threshold, electoral formulas (quotas and divisors), electoral districts and tiers and preference votes.

Chapter Two is concerned with four specific forms of this system applied in the Czech Republic. It describes elections to the Chamber of Deputies, local elections, elections to the regional assemblies and European elections.

The third chapter outlines the problems of Czech electoral reforms – specifically the big reform of elections to the Chamber of Deputies from 2000 and the case of Prague elections in 2010 which both had to be brought to the Constitutional Court.

Chapter Four offers a critical look on proportional representation in the Czech Republic. It consists of five parts. The first part focuses on the confusing system of local elections. Part two deals with the legal threshold. The third part tackles the issue of preference votes. Part four looks at electoral districts. And the last part of this chapter includes analysis of problems of unstable governments. In every part I provide not only criticism but also recommendations on how to solve these problems.

This thesis reaches a number of conclusions. We can say that the system of proportional representation has been embedded in the Czech Republic; and the legal threshold and preference votes seem to be accepted and used by voters. On the other hand, the electoral districts need to be adjusted because the present setting can infringe the equality of suffrage. We can also state that the electoral system has influence on composition of coalitions but not very strong. A change of electoral system can't automatically bring solutions of the problem of weak governments.