

The Free Vote Open List Proportional Representation electoral system

description	Free Vote Open List PR is a form of Proportional Representation in which voters vote for candidates from any party list. The votes cast for individual candidates on a party's list determine both the number of seats allocated to the party, and the order of the candidates on that party's list.
some of the countries that use the system	Switzerland
advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seats are shared fairly between parties according to the numbers of votes they win • allows smaller parties to be represented • more voters vote for winning candidates • encourages cooperation between parties in the legislature • in the absence of remedial measures, parties need 'balanced' lists to attract votes, thus promoting representation of women and minorities • allows voters to override parties' list ranking decisions • giving more control over who is elected to voters rather than to parties may result in the election process being regarded as more legitimate
disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need large ballots if all the candidates of each party must appear on the ballot, e.g. if Baghdad governorate was a single electoral district, voters could be entitled to mark up to 60 names out of several thousand candidates. Large ballots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – create increased costs and logistical issues – cause voter confusion, which increases the risk of invalid votes, and – cause voter exhaustion, i.e. many voters will not cast all the votes to which they are entitled, thus undermining a major objective of the free vote open list system. • election results may be delayed, since it is more complex to count votes and calculate the results than in non-proportional systems • can improve the chances of extremist candidates • can increase incentives for vote buying
effect of the number of seats in a district	Larger electoral districts tend to produce more proportional results.
implications for political parties	can weaken parties and their leaderships because (1) voters can override parties' list ranking decisions, and (2) candidates of the same party must compete with each other for votes
representation of women	Voters' choices of candidates can negate parties' efforts to promote the election of women candidates unless remedial measures are taken, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mandatory quotas for women on party lists • reserved seats to which only women can be elected, or • seats allocated to highest polling unsuccessful women candidates until a mandatory level of representation is achieved.
representation of minorities	Voters' choices of candidates can negate parties' efforts to promote the election of minority candidates unless remedial measures are taken, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mandatory quotas for minority candidates on party lists; • reserved seats to which only minority candidates can be elected; or • a waiver for minority parties of any qualifying threshold.

Example 1

electoral district with 5 seats, 1000 voters, 5000 valid votes, no threshold

	party A	party B	party C	party D
candidate 1	20	25	10	150
candidate 2	10	65	550	200
candidate 3	300	900	40	290
candidate 4	40	20	1200	100
candidate 5	460	260	200	160
total votes	830	1270	2000	900

Hare quota: $5000/5 = 1000$

	party A	party B	party C	party D
quotas	0.83	1.27	2.00	0.90
integer seats	0	1	2	0
remainder seats	1			1
total seats	1	1	2	1
winning candidates	A5	B3	C4, C2	D3

Example 2

electoral district with 10 seats, 100,000 voters and 1,000,000 valid votes, no threshold

	party A	party B	party C
candidate 1	50,000	25,000	10,000
candidate 2	45,000	20,000	15,000
candidate 3	35,000	30,000	15,000
candidate 4	60,000	24,000	18,000
candidate 5	65,000	36,000	11,000
candidate 6	38,000	34,000	28,000
candidate 7	60,000	22,000	15,000
candidate 8	92,000	23,000	13,000
candidate 9	65,000	29,000	12,000
candidate 10	70,000	29,000	11,000
total votes	580,000	272,000	148,000
% votes	58.0	27.2	14.8

Hare quota: $1,000,000/10 = 100,000$

	party A	party B	party C
quotas	5.80	2.72	1.48
integer seats	5	2	1
remainder seats	1	1	
total seats	6	3	1
winning candidates	A8, A10, A5, A9, A4, A7	B5, B6, B3	C6