

**THE IMPORTANCE OF
MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN
ENSURING FREE AND FAIR
ELECTION IN LITHUANIA**



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Lithuania is a parliamentary republic with unicameral parliament (Seimas).

Parliamentary election will be held in Lithuania on 9 October 2016, with a second round on 23 October in the constituencies where no candidate wins a majority in the first round of voting.

The Seimas has 141 members, elected to a four-year term in parallel voting.

All 141 seats in the Seimas are up for election; 71 in single-seat constituencies elected by majority vote and the remaining 70 in a nationwide constituency based on proportional representation.

In the majoritarian contests, if the voter turnout is above 40 per cent, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of valid votes to be elected. In case of a lower turnout, the winner must receive votes from at least 20 per cent of eligible voters. If there are more than two candidates in the election and no one wins in the first round, a run-off is held within two weeks between the two candidates who received the most votes. In this case, the candidate that receives the most votes is elected irrespective of the voter turnout.

In the proportional contest, the election is valid if the turnout is more than 25 per cent. In order to qualify for the allocation of seats, the candidate list must pass a five per cent threshold, while coalitions have to pass a seven per cent threshold.

CEC, organizing the election and aiming to ensure free and fair election uses modern election technologies in their activities.

Today we will address some of the key aspects:

*** The enrolment for independent participants of political campaign. The contestants for candidates and political parties may enrol as independent participants of the political campaign.

*** Application documents may be submitted electronically. Voters may also, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Central Electoral Commission, support electronically with their signatures a candidate who has nominated himself.

*** Submission of the application documents: The parties and candidates may submit applications documents electronically.

Electronic voters' list:

Currently there are about 2.5 million registered voters.

For the organisation and conduct of election, the following electoral rolls shall be compiled:

- 1) the electoral roll of the Republic of Lithuania;
- 2) single - member constituency electoral rolls; and
- 3) polling district electoral rolls.

Electoral rolls shall be drawn up two times - preliminary and final.

The procedure for compiling electoral rolls must be such that every citizen of the Republic of Lithuania who is eligible to vote is entered on electoral rolls. No one may be entered on an electoral roll more than once.

The electoral roll of the Republic of Lithuania and single-member constituency electoral rolls shall be compiled and kept by the Central Electoral Commission together with the keeper of the Residents' Register of the Republic of Lithuania by means of electronic communications.

The following data shall be used when drawing up electoral rolls:

- 1) in the electoral roll of the Republic of Lithuania: name, surname, personal number, date of birth, number of the personal document confirming the citizenship, the address of the place of residence and the grounds for the entry of the said address into the Residents' Register;
- 2) in the single-member constituency electoral roll: name, surname, personal number, date of birth, the address of the place of residence and the grounds for the entry into the Residents' Register;
- 3) in the polling district electoral roll: name, surname and the address of the place of residence. The addresses of the voters who have refused to consent that their addresses of the place of residence would be announced in the polling district electoral roll shall be indicated in the annex to the printed polling district electoral roll and in the poll card.

*** Preliminary electoral rolls shall be updated when transferring a voter from one electoral roll of a constituency or a polling district into another, when removing a voter from or registering him in the electoral roll of the Republic of Lithuania.

*** A list of citizens whose place of residence is not specifically known shall be also compiled.

*** Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who are staying in other states shall be entered on the electoral roll of the single-member constituency in the territory whereof the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is situated.

*** At least seven days in advance of the election, updated preliminary electoral rolls acknowledged in the manner established by the Central Electoral Commission shall be approved as final electoral rolls.

*** Changes in final electoral rolls may be made only subject to the consent of the Central Electoral Commission.

*** And, it's important, that, for the first time in the parliamentary election, all voters will be marked off in the national electronic list upon receiving their ballot at the polling station, as well as in case of early or homebound voting.

The benefits of the electronic voters' roll:

- *** The number of voters is displayed in one system;
- *** The system helps to ensure that the same person is not able to vote two or more times;
- *** It is possible to monitor the actual activity of voters on the day of the election.

“Election Guide”

During the Parliamentary election held on 9 October 2016 the commissions of constituencies and polling district will use the information system ‘Election Guide’ that is designed for work with voters’ rolls, accounting of working time of the commission members and the transfer of minutes of the polls data.

Accession to the system is done via the website of the Central Electoral Commission www.rinkejopuslapis.lt that gives the link to the E-Government Gateway where the e-banking system is used for the personal identification, i.e. e-signature, mobile signature, ID card and other ways of identification.

The commissions of constituencies and polling district record the actions performed in the “Guide”, i.e. count all the ballot papers issued for each member of the commission and returned by them; record the time of arrival and departure of the observers to the polls, and the remarks of the observers; indicate the number of the ballot papers found in the voting box and received in the envelopes; indicated the number of votes given for every candidate and for the list of candidates; filling the minutes of the poll using the above mentioned data.

“The Guide” gives the possibility for the Commission of the election constituency to monitor the process of filling the minutes of calculation of the poll of their own election constituency, and to draft and print out the minutes of calculation of the poll of the election constituency and organize and conduct the re-count of priority votes.

In election the documents shall include the following information:

- 1) the number of voters who have participated in the election in the constituency;
- 2) the number of voters who have participated in the election, by separately specifying those who have participated in the single-member constituency and in that part of the multi-member constituency which this single-member constituency constitutes;
- 3) the number of invalid ballot papers as well as the data established by the Central Electoral Commission which is necessary when checking if the votes cast by voters have been accurately counted, the final accounting results of ballot papers, return envelopes and ballot paper envelopes, blanks, seals used in election;
- 4) the number of ballot papers valid and invalid in the constituency;
- 5) the number of votes cast for each candidate for Seimas member in the single-member constituency;
- 6) the number of votes cast for each list of candidates in that part of the multi-member constituency which this single-member constituency constitutes;
- 7) the number of preference votes cast for each candidate in that part of the multi-member constituency which this single-member constituency constitutes.

The following data is recorded in the system:

*** Delivery of voter cards

*** Individuals voting at home.

Why this system is useful:

*** CEC can monitor in real time how the members of commissions of polling district and constituencies perform with counting of votes. It is possible to detect the mistakes of the commission of polling district and constituencies, and to request to correct them as soon as possible.

*** We can see the final activity of the voters.

*** We can see the number of void (defective) ballot papers.

*** We can quickly receive results of the election in single-member and multi-member constituencies.

CEC has another system named ABRIS:

*** The system is designed for checking of the voters arriving to vote on the election day and for registering of voters' requests to vote in another polling district. It is possible to vote only in an election ward of their own constituency during the Parliamentary election.

*** It should also be noted that the CEC uses the system where the parties and independent candidates participating in the election declare the funds received for the political campaign, and the expenses for the political advertising.

Why this system is useful:

*** Campaigns may be funded from political party funds, individual donations, loans, interest accrued from funds in campaign accounts, and a candidate's own money. In the current system we can see how much funding and from whom has each party or independent candidate received and, and where the money was spent.

*** We can see whether an independent candidate/ a party doesn't exceed the justifiable limit of the campaign funding.

*** We can monitor whether entire political advertising has been declared, and if we detect that there was more advertising than declared (e.g. if the candidate declared only two external advertisement stands, and we detected nine), we can raise an issue of failure to declare political advertising, illegal funding, and to forward this information to the State Tax Inspectorate, the Prosecutor's Office or to Financial Crime Investigation Service.

*** We can see what individuals and what amount of contributions have provided to the parties or to independent candidates. In suspicious cases we can forward this information to check to competent authorities. According to the Lithuanian legislation it is prohibited for legal entities to provide the contribution/ charity for parties or independent candidates. Therefore, in such case we may initiate the elimination of such candidate from the election.

The innovation in this Parliamentary election is scanners that facilitate scanning of identification documents during the early voting in major cities of Lithuania.

Therefore, we will not have to enter manually the voters' name into the system, and the system will display automatically which voter has arrived to vote, only marking such information.

*** CEC has a short information phone number 1855 which is in operation a month before and a month after the election.

*** Voters may call this number to find out about the venue of polling, necessary ID documents, and early voting.

*** All messages are registered and later the frequently asked questions are announced.

This was a brief presentation on the use of modern technologies in the CEC operation in the Republic of Lithuania.

**Thank you for
your attention!**

*If you have any questions, please
let me know.*

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