

# Can full proportional representation (PR) be achieved in Norway?

## Are there lessons for Sweden from the Norwegian experience?

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The electoral system in Norway is, after a reform that took effect in 2005, in many respects similar with the Swedish even if full PR is less likely in Norway than in Sweden.

Based on the election results from the elections in 2005 and 2009, ways to achieve better PR in Norway is studied in Grønvik (2010). The Norwegian experience may be a guide to problems that may be encountered and the results can probably be used as a guide to the solution of the (smaller) Swedish PR problems.

### Norwegian experience:

Four aspects of the electoral system were studied:

- The first divisor in the seat allocation in the constituencies (counties): 1.4 or lower
- The national threshold for representation: 4 / 3 percent
- The number of the national adjustment seats: 19 or more
- The semi-fixed geographic allocation of the seats between counties: Area factor

*The major factor* explaining the lack of PR is the modification to the Sainte-Laguë method of seat allocation (*1.4 as first divisor*) in the counties.

An outline of an electoral system that in most cases will secure the full PR is:

- Threshold for representation: 3 percent (nationwide), and 6 percent in counties (for parties not passing the national threshold)
- Seats allocation in counties: The clean version of the Sainte-Laguë method (division by 1, 3, 5, ...)
- An increase of national adjustment seats

The method for allocation of the total number of seats to each county (continued use of an area factor in addition to Norwegian or all inhabitants) is not an important factor in the attainment of PR. The use of the area factor in the geographic allocation of the seats between counties is viewed as a main democratic problem of the electoral system by many politicians.

### Lessons for Sweden:

What is the (potential) Swedish problem?

- National (or regional) threshold for representation? Possibly a large problem
- The first divisor in the constituencies? Solution in 2010
- The number of adjustment seats? Probably a solution

### Reference:

Grønvik (2010) "Valgordninga: Er prøvene bestått?" *Norsk Statsvitenskaplig tidsskrift* 26, s 132-148. (Available at <http://www.vestvollen.no/litteratur.html> ).