**PRESS RELEASE**

**Immediate 22.9.2021**

**GERMAN ELECTIONS:**

**THE BUNDESTAG TO *ELECT* ITS NEXT CABINET?**

In 2017, the post-election negotiations to form a majority (grand) coalition in Germany lasted for 136 days. So too in Ireland last year. In The Netherlands in 2017, it was 225 days. In Belgium, over 400!

It could best be done in a vote. The Parties which decide to join forces could elect the Executive. Or better still (in these days of Covid and Climate Change), all the Parties could elect an all-party, power-sharing Government of National Unity. Accordingly, on October 4th, there will be an online role-play ‘in’ Munich with the matrix vote. For a 15-member Cabinet, every Bundestag MP chooses, in order of preference, 15 fellow MPs to be in Cabinet, each to serve in a particular Ministry. A completed ballot for a mini-Cabinet of 5 Ministers might look like this: 5 names in the shaded column, and 5 A’s in the matrix, one A in each column and one in each row.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Names  (in order of preference) | | Chancellor | Ministers of | | | |
| Finance | Interior | Foreign Affairs | Economy |
| 1st | Ms *j* |  |  |  | A |  |
| 2nd | Ms *t* |  | A |  |  |  |
| 3rd | Mr *g* | A |  |  |  |  |
| 4th | Ms *w* |  |  |  |  | A |
| 5th | Mr *b* |  |  | A |  |  |

Part I of a matrix vote analysis examines the preferences in the shaded column, to identify by PR the fifteen most popular candidates. In Part II, the preferences in the matrix are translated into points, and successful candidates are appointed to Ministries in descending order of points totals.

As in PR-STV, Parties are encouraged to nominate only as many candidates as they think they can get elected. As in the Modified Borda Count MBC, voters are encouraged to submit a full slate of preferences (which then become points). In effect, therefore, the matrix vote encourages all MPs to cross the Party divide – a prerequisite of good power-sharing! At best, the outcome will be a Cabinet in which, individually, every minister is well suited to the chosen Ministry, while collectively, every Party is represented in its proportional due.

The matrix vote, a colour-blind methodology (as opposed to the current practice in Belfast of a d’Hondt analysis, or in Berlin of protracted negotiations), was first tested in 1986 at a cross-community conference in Belfast. In 2016, a Dublin demonstration was hosted by *The Irish Times*. And now, care of IFAMD {*Institut für Angewandtes (Applied) Mechanism Design*} [www.ifamd.org](http://www.ifamd.org) in Munich, it will be role-played for the Bundestag as part of this season’s Adam Smith lectures in the Centre for Conflict Resolution [ccr-munich.de](http://ccr-munich.de/)

Peter Emerson

Director, the de Borda Institute

36 Ballysillan Road, Belfast BT14

+44 (0) 7837717979

[www.deborda.org](http://www.deborda.org)

[pemerson@deborda.org](mailto:pemerson@deborda.org)