**PRESS RELEASE**

**Immediate 21.7.2022**

**UKRAINE**

**REFERENDUMS... OR FALSE FLAGS**

If Putin chooses the option(s), the referendums will be unfair and the outcomes inaccurate**.** Such dictatorial and binary referendums and/or majority votes were used by Napoléon in 1803, Lenin of the Bolsheviks (the very word means ‘members of the majority’) in 1903, Hitler when he became Führer in 1936, Duvalier, Pinochet *et al...* and Saddam Hussein.

Better, as in New Zealand in 1992, to task an independent commission to draw up a short list of options, in that instance five.

Russia’s planned referendums for regions of Ukraine are a nonsense... but in 2014, with a referendum due to take place in Scotland, the word Shotlandiya’ (Шотландия, Scotland) was used by Russian separatists in Luhansk*...* to justify the ‘unjustifiable’**.** We are part of the problem. And it could yet get even worse: Milorad Dodik is rattling his ballot boxes – and sabres! – in Republika Srpska, Anatoly Bibilov in South Ossetia.

(Other *binary* referendums have also been crazy, as in UK: (a) 2011, FPTP or AV? for a PR supporter, that was like asking a vegetarian, ‘beef or lamb?’ (b) Scotland’s referendum in 2014 should have been but was not multi-optional on ‘independence, ‘devo-max’ and ‘status quo’... and the winner was ‘devo-max’ which wasn’t even on the ballot paper! (c) Brexit was a multi-option question, yet we had only one binary question on only one option.)

Referendums are often meaningless, as when the minority abstains... like:

+ the nationalists in NI in the 1973 border poll,

+ the Catholics in the Krajina in 1991,

+ the Orthodox in Croatia one week later,

+ the Crimean Tatars in 2014.

Furthermore, some are recognised and some not,

(a) by the West:

+ the 1992 referendum in Bosnia, yes; in Kosovo/a in 1991, no; and

(b) by Putin:

+ the 2014 vote in Donetsk to opt out of Ukraine, yes; the vote in Krasnoarmiisk, when 69%, some two million people, twice the size of the NI electorate, voted to opt out of Donetsk and back into Ukraine, no.

Accordingly, if only for the sake of Ukraine, (Bosnia and Georgia), Scotland, Ireland (and Cataonia) should forgo any binary ballots, and opt instead for a more accurate, pluralist, democratic multi-option if not preferential poll.

Peter Emerson

Director, the de Borda Institute

36 Ballysillan Road

Belfast BT14 7QQ

07837717979

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

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