

Croatian path to liberal democracy: mix of representative democracy and public initiatives for referendum

The youngest member of EU (since 2013): basic form of liberal democracy

- Representative democratic model, elections for the parliament (sabor) are held every four years – deliberation of once elected officials with the *demos* is minimal
- Referendums can be announced both by the Parliament and the President of the Republic – the public can ask from the parliament announcement of the referendum if 10% of the total number of voters sign a petition (very strict condition)
- Increasing distrust in the political parties – refusal of *demos* in the participation in political procedures, fragmentation of the political parties (especially on the left), and the rise of populist rhetoric and parties
- Referendums are legally allowed in different forms.
- Parliament and voters can revise the Constitution independently from each other
- There is a limited provision about restrictions on Constitution changes via referendum.
- Citizens' initiatives for referenda calls.



**Brak = žena + muškarac
Sve ostalo je nešto drugo.**

PRIKUPLJANJE POTPISA ZA
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- Citizen protests in 2011 ('Facebook protest')
- One initiative undertaken by neoconservative NGO 'In the name of the Family' was successful: referendum for constitutional definition of marriage in 2013. Result was positive and the Constitution was changed without participation of the Parliament in this decision.
- Other initiatives for changes of laws have not been successful. Most significant in recent years were referenda initiatives on electoral law reform and anti-Istanbul Convention.
- In the last five years rise of the right-wing NGO's provoked a Croatian version of culture wars – questions of marriage and family, abortion and school curriculum have become place of heated public (ideological!) battle
- Change in the electoral procedures (preferential votes are used for the first time in the parliament elections) and referendums
- Although official politics does not rate deliberation with the public highly, increasing number of different NGO's in Croatian public sphere are using the methods of deliberative democracy in their governance (e.g. NGO "Naš Hajduk" in the field of professional football) – it is a certain hope for the future, despite the 'neoconservative revolution' gaining cultural hegemony in present time