

What affected voters' decisions in the 6 October 2018 parliamentary election?

Report by Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS

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(based on the post-election survey conducted by the research centre SKDS, as well as monitoring of how party popularity ratings were presented in the media)

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Summary of main conclusions

- **THE 13TH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS** indicate significant changes in the Latvian political landscape. In the 2018 election, the parties in the governing coalition lost more than half of the voters who had supported them in 2014. The second, third and fourth best results were achieved by three parties which have not previously been represented in parliament. They managed to take voters away from the previous coalition as well as attract citizens who did not vote in the 2014 election. The coalition parties not only lost votes to the new parties, but also partly exchanged voters amongst themselves.
- **APPROXIMATELY TWO THIRDS OF VOTERS**, including a majority of those who voted for the most popular parties, agreed with the statement that any change is better than no change. Perhaps it is exactly this kind of desire from voters that has created such major changes in the Latvian parliament.
- **FOR SOME VOTERS, THE DECISION SEEMED SIMPLE**, but for others – difficult. It seemed especially difficult for those citizens who had voted for the party *Vienotība* [Unity] four years ago; simple – for those who had voted for the party *Saskaņa* [Harmony].
- **AROUND A THIRD OF LATVIAN CITIZENS** made their final decision about who to vote for in the 2018 election within a week of the vote, or in the polling station itself on 6 October. For some parties, more than half of their voters made the decision to support them during the final week.
- **ONLY 14% OF THOSE LATVIAN CITIZENS** who did not vote in the 6 October election decided not to participate because they were looking for, but did not find, suitable candidates to support; much more often, people gave an organisational reason for not voting or indicated that they did not see the point in the election process. If voting had been compulsory, the most votes would have been gained by the parties *Saskaņa*, *KPV.LV* [“Who owns the state?” party] and *ZZS* [the Union of Greens and Farmers].
- **IN DECIDING WHO TO VOTE FOR**, the most important sources of information were suggestions from friends, close ones and colleagues, as well as the parties’ performance in the pre-election debates.
- **THE POST-ELECTION SURVEY** showed that various questionable election campaign tactics employed – distributing free editions of *Dienas Bizness* newspaper, distributing information directed against the *Saskaņa* candidate Vitālijs Orlovs, as well as publicising the results of tax reforms – most likely did not achieve their intended result.
- **TELEVISION HAS CONTINUED TO BE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL** form of media for voters – 76% of voters received political information prior to the election from one or more television channels. However, the influence of television has decreased – younger citizens watch television rarely, getting news from the internet instead. The post-election survey showed that Latvian citizens generally trust the work of the media.
- **AROUND 70% OF LATVIAN CITIZENS** are active users of at least one social network. 18% of Latvian citizens indicated that the activity of parties and candidates on social media was an important factor in deciding which party to vote for. More than half of all citizens noticed political advertisements on social media.
- **THE POST-ELECTION SURVEY** showed that 10 parties had a realistic chance of getting into parliament by exceeding the 5% vote threshold. 81% of voters viewed the chances of a party exceeding the 5% threshold as an important or very important consideration when deciding who to vote for. Taking into account the high proportion of voters who made up their minds in the final week, how correctly the media presented and voters interpreted public opinion polls had particular importance. The monitoring of public opinion polls performed by the Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS shows that public opinion polls are rarely reported by the media in a way that enables the voter to make correct conclusions about a party’s prospects of getting into parliament.

Introduction

In spite of there being more preconditions for entering the 6 October 2018 election than in previous parliamentary elections¹, 16 party lists participated in the election – more than in previous election cycles.

The 13th parliamentary election happened at a time when internet social networks have become important platforms for party campaigns and have also heightened anxieties over potential interference by Russia in the election processes of various states. To determine whether these fears are well-founded, several organisations in the Latvian community conducted monitoring of social media, as well as traditional media and residential post boxes. Immediately after the election, PROVIDUS and the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence commissioned the research centre SKDS to perform a public opinion poll. The aim of the poll: to determine the factors which could have affected voters' decisions in the 6 October 2018 election.

This report has been prepared on the basis of the SKDS public opinion poll. During the period 13 to 23 October, 854 Latvian citizens (aged 18 to 75) from all Latvian regions were surveyed in their place of residence.

The report has also used PROVIDUS data taken from monitoring the presentation of party popularity ratings in the media, which was performed in the month prior to the election. During the monitoring, LETA Media Monitoring prepared clippings of media reports and articles by selecting all the material which mentioned party popularity ratings, and then PROVIDUS analysts collected and analysed them.

1 What do the 13th parliamentary election results show?

1.1. Voters have significantly changed their voting tendencies

The 13th parliamentary election results indicate significant changes in the Latvian political landscape. **In the 2018 election, the parties in the governing coalition (*Nacionālā apvienība* [National Alliance], *Zaļo un Zemnieku savienība* (ZZS) [the Union of Greens and Farmers], *Jaunā Vienotība* [New Unity]) lost more than half of the voters who had supported them in 2014.** The three parties who gained second, third and fourth places in the new parliament had not previously been represented: *KPV.LV* ["Who owns the state?" party], *Jaunā Konservatīvā partijai* (JKP) [the New Conservative party] and *Attīstībai/Par!* [Development/For!] (see Figure 1, page 6).

The post-election survey of voters shows that the previous governing coalition parties not only lost votes to the new parties, but also partly exchanged voters amongst themselves

– especially so for the *Nacionālā apvienība* and *Vienotība* parties (see Figure 2, page 7). A significant proportion of those who voted for *Nacionālā apvienība* in 2018 had either voted for *Vienotība* four years ago or not voted, while a notable proportion of those who voted for *Jaunā Vienotība* [New Unity] in 2018 had previously voted for *Nacionālā apvienība*. Also, a proportion of ZZS voters in 2018 had previously been *Vienotība* or *Nacionālā apvienība* voters.

The new political parties mainly took the previous coalition's voters. *KPV.LV* voters indicated in the survey that either they had not participated in the previous election (around 30%) or they had voted for ZZS (around 24% of *KPV.LV* voters) or *Nacionālā apvienība*. The voter bases of *Jaunā konservatīvā partija* and *Attīstībai/Par!* in 2018 are comprised of previous *Vienotība*, ZZS or *Nacionālā apvienība* voters. Also, *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* [the Latvian Association of Regions], which did not make it into parliament, managed to attract some previous ZZS and *Nacionālā apvienība* voters.

The highest voter retention rate was achieved by the *Saskaņa* party. 77% of its voters indicated in the survey that they had also voted for the party in the previous election. Around a third of those who voted for *Latvijas Krievu savienība* [the Latvian Russian Union], which did not make it into parliament, previously voted for *Saskaņa*.

1.2. Hard to choose for ethnic Latvians, simple for others

The post-election survey showed that **57% of voters found the voting decision easy; 41% – difficult.**

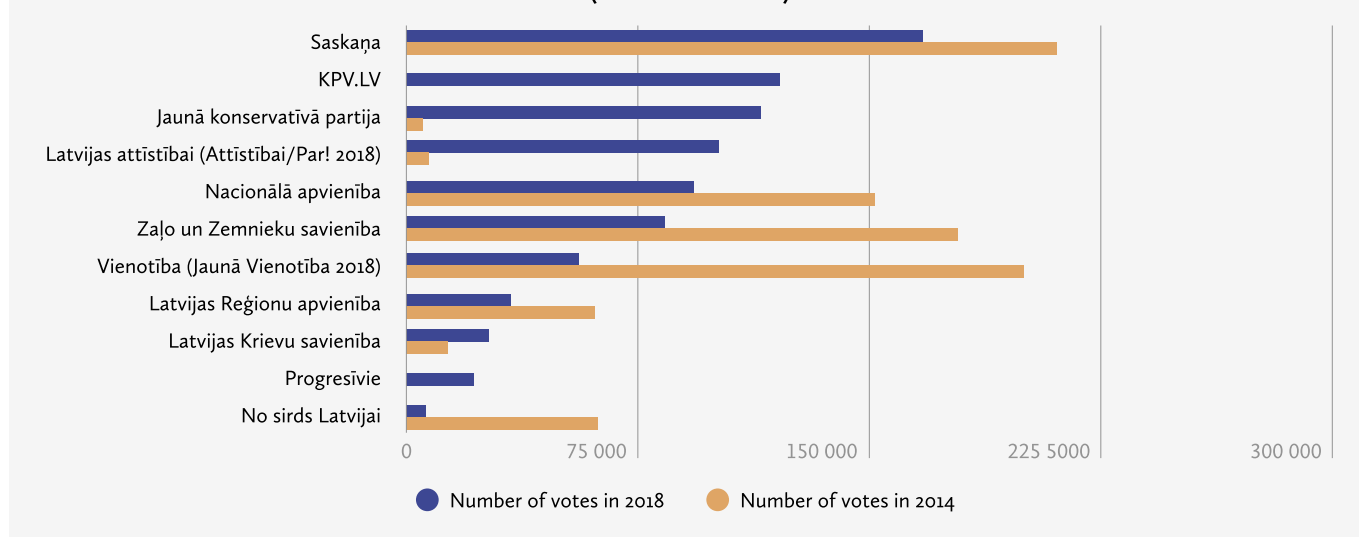
The response to this question notably differed between ethnic Latvians and other groups. Where 47% of ethnic Latvians considered the choice in the 2018 election to be difficult, it was only 25% for people of other ethnicities. The choice seemed difficult for a particularly high percentage of those who voted for *Vienotība* four years ago (more than half of them), as well as those who supported *Nacionālā apvienība* or ZZS in 2014. For comparison: only 15% of those who voted for *Saskaņa* in 2014 found it difficult to decide who to vote for in 2018.

1.3. For a third of the electorate – a last minute decision

Around 35% of Latvian citizens made their final voting decision for the 2018 election within a week of the vote, or even in the polling station itself. This parameter also showed notable ethnic variations: citizens who speak Russian in their family decided who to vote for on average earlier than those whose family language is Latvian. Only 33% of voters indicated

¹ The requirements for parties to have at least 500 members and to have registered at least one year before the election.

**Figure 1. Votes received by parties in the 2014 and 2018 parliamentary elections (CVK data)
(number of votes)**



that they had already made up their mind in the first days of September or even earlier.

The latest to decide who to vote for on 6 October were those who voted for *Jaunā Vienotība* (around 69% decided to do so in the final week), *Attīstībai/Par!* (around 65% decided in the final week), *JKP* (61%), *Latvijas Krievu savienība* (59%), and *Progresīvie* [The Progressives] (56%). The voting decision was made comparatively early by those who voted for *Saskaņa* (of whom only 23% made their decision in the final week) or for *ZZS*.

For approximately a third of those who did not vote in the 2018 election, the decision not to participate was also made within the final week prior to the election.

1.4. Why did citizens go or not go to vote?

The most common reasons why Latvian citizens participated in the 6 October election were as follows (summarised answers to an open question without fixed choices):

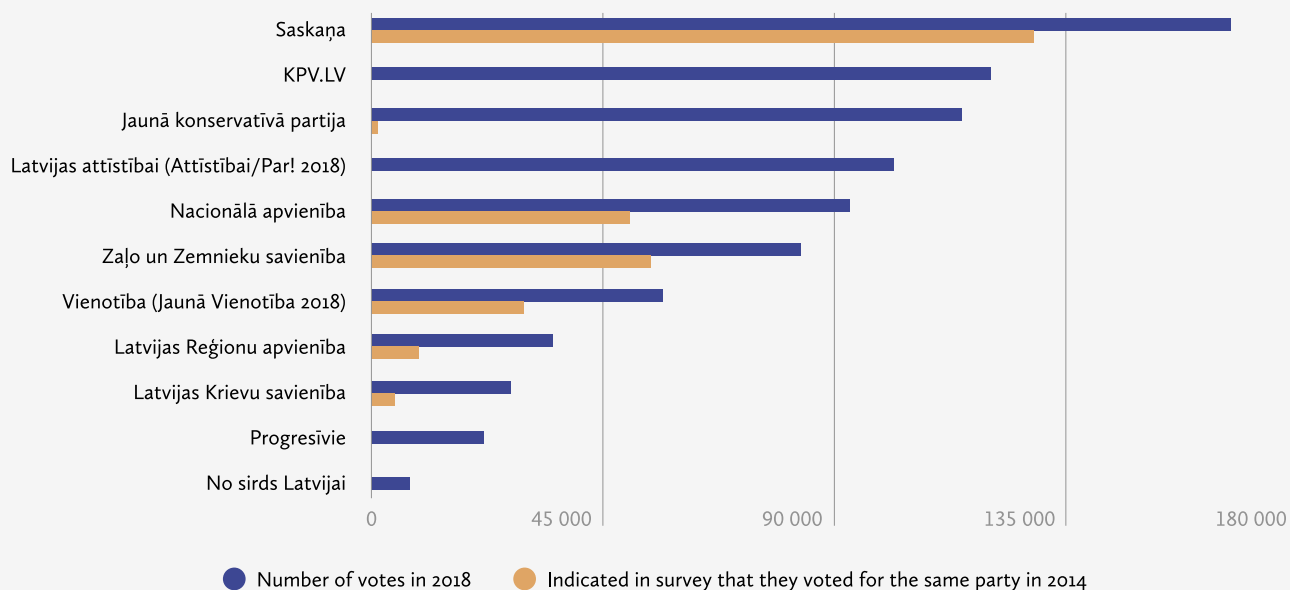
1. Citizen's duty (28%)
2. Hope for a better future (21%)
3. Wanted to support a particular party/candidate (17%)
4. Wanted to express their opinion (10%)
5. Could not explain their motivation (8%)
6. So that new politicians can replace the old leadership and parliament (6%)
7. Always takes part in all elections (5%)
8. Feels responsible for what happens in Latvia, is a Latvian patriot (5%)
9. Wanted to vote so that a particular party would receive less seats (4%)
10. Every vote counts (3%)
11. All relatives/friends participated (joined them) (3%)

The most common reasons why some Latvian citizens did not participate in the 6 October election were as follows (summarised answers to an open question without fixed choices):

1. Considers that nothing will get better by voting (16% of citizens who did not vote). The survey showed, that this group of Latvian citizens had decided not to vote a long time before Election Day.
2. Didn't know who to vote for, or there wasn't a suitable candidate (14%). In election week, around a third of these citizens were unsure, still considering the possibility of going to vote.
3. Not interested in politics, or not interested in these questions (10%). This group had decided not to vote a long time before Election Day.
4. Was busy or working (9%). Around half of this group understood only on Election Day itself that they would not go to vote.
5. Doesn't see the point (9%). Almost all these electors decided not to vote a long time before Election Day.
6. Health problems (7%). These voters only a short time before Election Day, or on the day itself, understood that they would not vote.
7. No faith in it, don't trust anyone (7%).
8. Didn't have a voting slip (6%).
9. Didn't have time (5%).
10. Was out of Latvia (5%).

Altogether, around 42% of non-voters did not participate in the election because they do not see the point in voting or politics does not interest them. Another approximately 33% wanted to participate, but could not vote because of organisational (work, didn't have a voting slip) or health reasons. Only 14% did not vote because they were looking

**Figure 2. Voter retention in the 2014 and 2018 parliamentary elections (CVK and SKDS data)
(number of votes)**



for but could not find suitable candidates – this group of citizens contained above-average numbers of people with high education, Latvians, and people with either high incomes, or conversely, low incomes.

1.5. What characterises citizens who did not participate in the election?

Judging from the post-election survey data, groups of citizens who participated in the 6 October 2018 election proportionately less are characterised by the following parameters:

men, age group 18-34, basic education, family language is Russian, low income.

When asked which party they would vote for if participation in the election was compulsory, the most frequently mentioned choice was the party *Saskaņa* (11% of citizens who did not vote), *KPV.LV* (9%) and *ZZS* (6%). That means that, if the election attendance was higher than 55%, the most likely beneficiaries of the increased attendance would be these three parties.

1.6. How did various groups of society vote?

Voter GROUP	TYPICAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE 2018 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
Young people aged 18-24	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) Didn't vote 2) <i>KPV.LV</i> 3) <i>Saskaņa</i> 4) <i>JKP</i> Compared with other voter groups, late decision who to vote for.
People aged 64-75	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) <i>Saskaņa</i> 2) didn't vote 3) <i>ZZS</i> 4) <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> Compared with other voter groups, early decision who to vote for.
Citizens with basic education	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) Didn't vote 2) <i>Saskaņa</i> 3) <i>KPV.LV</i>
Citizens with higher education	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) <i>Saskaņa</i> 2) <i>JKP</i> 3) <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i>
Latvians	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) Didn't vote 2) <i>KPV.LV</i> 3) <i>JKP</i> 4) <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> Voting decision – comparatively late and difficult.

Other Ethnicities	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) <i>Saskaņa</i> 2) didn't vote 3) <i>JKP</i> 4) <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> Voting decision – comparatively early and simple.
Low income citizens	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) Didn't vote 2) <i>KPV.LV</i> 3) <i>Saskaņa</i> , 4) <i>ZZS</i>
High income citizens	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> 2) <i>Saskaņa</i> 3) <i>JKP</i>
Rural inhabitants	Voting decision (in frequency order): 1) Didn't vote 2) <i>KPV.LV</i> 3) <i>Saskaņa</i> Compared with other voter groups, late decision who to vote for.

1.7. Who are the typical voters for the most popular parties?

Party List (2018)	Characterisation OF TYPICAL voters
<i>Saskaņa</i>	Non-Latvians (only a fifth of voters were ethnic Latvians), average income, secondary education. Main motivation to vote – support specific party/candidate (29%), hope for a better future (26%).
<i>KPV.LV</i>	Young people (18-24), basic and secondary education, Latvians (94%), manual workers, many low-income voters, rural inhabitants. Minimal support from pension-age citizens. Main motivation to vote – hope for a better future (33%), support a specific candidate (17%), desire to see new politicians (15%).
<i>JKP</i>	Similar support across different age groups, secondary and higher education, Latvians (86%), average and moderately high incomes. Minimal support citizens with basic education, low-income citizens, rural inhabitants. Main motivation to vote – citizen's duty (26%), hope for a better future (25%).
<i>Attīstībai/Par!</i>	Middle-generation voters (25-54), higher education, Latvians (94%), private sector workers, high incomes, Riga residents. Minimal support from young people, as well as pension-age persons and citizens with basic education. Main motivation to vote – citizen's duty (41%).
<i>Nacionālā apvienība</i>	Voters aged over 45, secondary and higher education, Latvians (96%), average incomes. Minimal support from young people and citizens with basic education or low incomes. Main motivation to vote – citizen's duty (29%), support a specific candidate (21%).
<i>ZZS</i>	Voters aged over 55, secondary education, Latvians (88%), manual workers, pensioners, rural inhabitants. Minimal support from voters under 35, people with high incomes, and Riga residents. Main motivation to vote – citizen's duty (29%).
<i>Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība</i>	Voters aged over 45, Latvians (94%), rural inhabitants. Minimal support from urban inhabitants (except Riga). Main motivation to vote – hope for a better future (34%) and citizen's duty (33%).
<i>Vienotība</i>	Voters aged 25-34 and over 64, higher education, Latvians. Comparatively minimal support among rural inhabitants.
<i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i>	Supported by men, basic and secondary education, non-Latvians (80%), manual workers. Main motivation to vote – citizen's duty (29%), hope for a better future (20%), support for a specific party/candidate (20%)
<i>Progresīvie</i>	Voters aged 25-44, higher education, Latvians (80%), average and moderately high incomes. Main motivation to vote – citizen's duty (55%).

2 Campaign methods and messages

2.1. The main information sources in deciding how to vote

In the post-election survey, Latvian citizens were asked to mark the information sources and events which were important to them in choosing who to vote for in the election. Each respondent could select multiple answers.

Information source or event	Comments
1. Choices or recommendations from friends, close ones or colleagues – 43%	Recommendations seemed particularly important for young people (up to age 24), non-Latvians, and <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> , <i>Saskaņa</i> and <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> voters. They were least important for <i>ZZS</i> voters.
2. Performance of parties and candidates in the pre-election debates on TV, radio and internet portals – 40%	This factor was particularly important for citizens with higher education or high incomes, as well as those in Latvian-speaking families. The party's performance in the debates seemed particularly important for <i>Jaunā Vienotība</i> , <i>Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība</i> and <i>Jaunā Konservatīvā partija</i> voters. It was least important for <i>Saskaņa</i> voters.
3. Activity and posts of parties and candidates on social media – 18%	The activities of parties on the internet seemed particularly important for citizens aged up to 34 and for those with higher education or high incomes. This factor was most often selected as important by citizens who voted for <i>KPV.LV</i> (37% of its voters) and <i>Jaunā Vienotība</i> . As unimportant: for <i>ZZS</i> voters (only 2% of whom marked party and candidate activity on social media as an important factor).
4. Choice or recommendation from a well-known public figure – 17%	This factor was rated as having similar importance by various demographic groups; among the parties whose voters more often rated it as important was <i>PROGRESĪVIE</i> .
5. Advertisements of parties and candidates in the mass media (TV, radio, internet portals) – 17%	This factor was rated as having similar importance by various demographic groups.
6. Party newspapers and other printed advertisements – 9%	Printed materials were more often marked as an important factor by <i>Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība</i> and <i>ZZS</i> voters.
7. Meeting with a political candidate in person – 7%	Meetings in person were rated as important particularly by <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> , <i>Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība</i> and <i>Jaunā Vienotība</i> voters.

In order to evaluate which parties' and candidates' activities could have affected voters' decisions during the campaign period (as opposed to at other times), the post-election survey asked voters questions about political activity and information they received specifically during the peak period of election campaigning – from August 2018 until Election Day.

Watched the pre-election debates on television or on the internet

Prior to the 2018 election, both the public and commercial media organised pre-election debates on various platforms. In the post-election survey, voters were asked the question whether they had watched the debates either on television or on the internet in August, September and the first week of October: **34% of citizens** responded that they had.

In characterising voters who watched the pre-election discussions, the following conclusions can be made:

- Similar indicators across all age groups, except for young people (aged 18-24), fewer of whom watched the debates (23%);
- A much greater proportion of citizens with higher education watched the debates than citizens with basic education (43% versus 22%);
- The debates were watched by a greater proportion of Latvians (39%) than people of other ethnicities (22%);
- The debates were watched slightly less often by citizens with low incomes;
- The debates were watched most often by residents of Vidzeme – least often by Latgale residents;
- Some parties' supporters watched the debates more often, but other parties' supporters – less so. Of the parties which gained at least 2% of the vote, the debates were most watched by *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* and *Nacionālā Apvienība* voters, and least watched by *Latvijas Krievu savienība*, *Saskaņa* and *ZZS* voters.

Meetings in person with political candidates

Only 4% of all citizens indicated that they met with election candidates in person during the course of the election campaign (from August to Election Day). Comparatively higher rates were recorded by *KPV.LV*, *Saskaņa* and *Nacionālā Apvienība* voters. Meetings were also more frequently mentioned by *PROGRESĪVIE* and *Latvijas Krievu savienība* voters, but it is hard to draw any concrete conclusions about these parties' voters due to the small number of respondents.

At the same time, **6% of post-election survey respondents considered that, in 2018, candidates met in person with voters more often than in other campaigns.** This tendency was observed most often by voters for *KPV.LV* (13%), *Nacionālā Apvienība*, *Attīstībai/Par!* and *PROGRESĪVIE*.

Online communications with political candidates

2% of survey respondents indicated that they had communicated with election candidates on the internet during the pre-election campaign. In demographic terms, the only notable trend is that these are voters whose families communicate in Latvian.

22% of voters observed that candidates addressed voters on social media more in this election campaign than in other campaigns. This was most often noted by voters under the age of 55, those with higher education, and those with high incomes. Attempts to engage with voters on social media more were most often noticed by voters for *PROGRESĪVIE*, *Attīstībai/Par!*, *KPV.LV* and *Nacionālā apvienība*. Least noticed: by *ZZS*, *Latvijas Krievu savienība* and *Saskaņa* voters.

Usage of various internet applications intended to educate voters

6,2% of voters used the party compatibility questionnaire *Partiju šķīrotava* [Party Sorter] on the website *lsm.lv*, while a similar questionnaire by *Žurnāls IR* [IR Magazine] (*Politiskais Tinderis* [Political Tinder]) was used by 4,6% of voters.

2,6% of voters checked the reputation of candidates on the site *deputatiuzdelnas.lv* or on *svitrosana.lv*.

2.2. Questionable election campaign methods

Free edition of *Dienas Bizness*

Prior to the election, a proportion of Latvian voters received a free edition of *Dienas Bizness* newspaper in their postboxes containing a collection of articles which particularly praised *KPV.LV* and *Saskaņa* candidates, but criticised candidates of *Nacionālā apvienība*, *Jaunā Vienotība*, *Attīstībai/Par!* and *JKP*, as well as the finance minister Dana Reizniece-Ozola (*ZZS*). 18% of Latvian residents indicated in the post-election survey

that they received this edition. Recipients of the free paper most often voted for the following parties (mentioned in frequency order): *Saskaņa*, *JKP*, *Nacionālā apvienība*, *ZZS*. Therefore, there is no indication that this edition affected the election results – **recipients of the free edition voted more often than average for *Saskaņa*, but less than average - for *KPV.LV*.** Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that receipt of this edition reduced support for those parties that were criticised in it.

Free edition directed against *Saskaņa* candidate Vitālijs Orlovs

In mid-September 2018, KNAB [the elections watchdog] banned a smear campaign which was directed against the *Saskaņa* candidate Vitālijs Orlovs². A free newspaper edition containing information to smear this member of parliament was distributed to residents of the Zemgale constituency.

The post-election survey shows that this paper might have been received by 3,6% of voters; more often – by Russian-speaking voters. Around half of the recipients of this paper voted for the party *Saskaņa* on 6 October. CVK data confirms that Vitālijs Orlovs started with position 2 on the voting list in the Zemgale constituency and was elected to the 13th parliament as the second most popular candidate in this constituency. The election results confirm that he received approximately 200 more minus votes than other candidates (and also 200 more minuses than in the 2014 election in the same constituency) and 1000 fewer plus votes than in the 2014 election. At the same time, from this data, it is not possible to determine how much this weaker individual result is a consequence of the free paper directed against Vitālijs Orlovs as opposed to other factors – for example, the election campaign strategy and methods of *Saskaņa* in this constituency.

Advertisements paid for by the finance ministry about the results of tax reforms

In August 2018, Latvian state radio started to broadcast finance ministry advertisements about good results of tax reforms, attracting criticism for the fact that state resources were being spent for the purpose of pre-election campaigning by the governing coalition parties, particularly *ZZS*³.

The post-election survey shows that the tax reform praising advertisements had been noticed by 11% of voters. Their most common voting decisions in the 2018 election were as follows (in frequency order): *Nacionālā apvienība*, *Attīstībai/Par!*, *JKP*,

2 https://www.diena.lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/knab-aizliedz-sia-_zurnals-nau-da-ir_-veikt-prieksvelesanu-agitaciju-par-maksu-14205337

3 <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/knab-nesaskata-slepto-agitaciju-finansu-ministrijas-slavinosa-reklama.a289049/>

Saskaņa, KPV.LV. Only 1% of voters who had noticed these advertisements voted for ZZS on 6 October. This allows one to consider that **these advertisements either had no effect on the election results or had exactly the opposite effect to that intended**; that is to say, reduced rather than increased the popularity of ZZS.

2.3. Voter mobilisation slogans: which resonated?

To determine the reasons which have prompted so many Latvian voters to change their voting preferences, the post-election survey included several statements with particularly high potential for voter mobilisation or populism – analogues of these statements were often invoked during the course of the 2018 election campaign.

Any change in Latvian politics is better than no change

68% of Latvian citizens are prepared to agree with the statement that any changes are better than no changes. Perhaps exactly this indicator best explains the major shifts in the political landscape in the 6 October election.

A similar level of desire for change was observed in all age groups; comparatively higher – for Latvians, people with basic education, and people with low or average incomes.

Among the parties whose voters most wanted change were *KPV.LV* (79% of the party's voters) and the party *PROGRESĪVIE* (75% of its voters). Similarly, least wanted change: *Latvijas Krievu savienība* voters (51%), *Attīstībai/Par!* voters (63%), citizens who did not vote (64%), and *Nacionālā apvienība* voters (64%).

Better new rogues than old ones

The Latvian community on the whole is not prepared to agree with the statement that new rogues are better than old ones. **Only 23% of citizens agreed with this statement, whereas 53% disagreed.**

The new rogues theory is most popular with young people, people with basic education, Latvians, citizens with low or average incomes, and rural inhabitants.

Among the parties whose voters most often supported this theory were *PROGRESĪVIE* and *KPV.LV*; least often – *Nacionālā apvienība*, *ZZS* and *Attīstībai/Par!*

The Latvian state has offended me

31% of Latvian citizens consider that the Latvian state has offended them, whereas 62% do not agree with this statement. This resentment of Latvia was most often observed with non-Latvians, people with low incomes or basic education, and residents of Latgale.

Resentment of Latvia was most often felt by *Latvijas Krievu savienība* voters (72%), *Saskaņa* voters (43%), as well as citizens who did not vote (41%). Resentment was felt least often by voters for *Attīstībai/Par!* (6%), *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* (11%), *Jaunā Vienotība* (21%) and *JKP* (23%).

Most of the people in power in Latvia are corrupt

69% of Latvian citizens agree with the statement that the ruling powers in Latvia are corrupt. Comparatively higher agreement: from people aged under 55, those with basic education, those with low incomes, residents of Latgale, and non-Latvians.

From across the political spectrum, those that most often sensed corruption among the people in power were *Latvijas Krievu savienība* (87%), *Saskaņa* (82%) and *KPV.LV* (72%) voters, as well as citizens who did not vote in the election (78%). Those who least agreed with the statement were *Nacionālā apvienība* (51%), *Attīstībai/Par!* (55%), *Jaunā Vienotība* (56%) and *ZZS* (57%) voters.

Latvia's future – threatened

In 2018, a sense of threat has had a small effect on voters' minds. **Overall, 37% of Latvian citizens consider that Latvia's future is under threat, while 54% feel it is secure.** A feeling of threat was most common for citizens with low incomes and residents of Latgale.

The most concerned are *Latvijas Krievu savienība* voters – 65% indicated in the survey that Latvia's future is threatened. A relatively high sense of threat was also observed in non-voters (44%), *JKP* voters (43%), *KPV.LV* voters (41%) and *Nacionālā apvienība* (40%) voters.

Those who felt most secure were *Jaunā Vienotība*, *Progresīvie*, *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība*, *Attīstībai/Par!* and *Saskaņa* voters (of whom only 27-29% saw Latvia as threatened).

2.4. Doubting the work of the media

The 2018 parliamentary election campaign will be remembered for the hateful rhetoric of the party *KPV.LV* against various journalists in the media. **The post-election survey shows** (see the next chapter for more details) **that the accusations of KPV.LV have not damaged the reputations of the media organisations concerned.**

Trust in the public media is high, and moreover, *KPV.LV* voters trust the public media on average more than citizens in general (trust in LTV1: 46% among *KPV.LV* voters, as opposed to a 41% average level of trust in LTV1 from citizens in the state as whole; trust in Latvian Radio 1 among *KPV.LV* voters is 20%, but it is 19% in the state in general). LTV1 and

Latvian Radio 1 are least trusted by *Latvijas Krievu savienība* and *Saskaņa* voters.

On asking voters whether they considered that the public media has treated the voters of certain parties disrespectfully, 20% of citizens reported that they agreed, 43% disagreed, and the remainder did not express an opinion. Interestingly, those who most often agreed were non-Latvians, non-users of the media, and also *Latvijas Krievu savienība* voters. Voters who watched LTV1 during the pre-election campaign more often disagreed with the statement (55% disagreed, 16% agreed, the remainder did not express an opinion).

Approximately 18% of Latvian citizens considered that there was a lot of misinformation about candidates during the election campaign period which they did not believe. Such misinformation was most often noticed by *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība*, *Jaunā Vienotība*, *JKP* and *Nacionālā apvienība* voters.

3 The importance of traditional media and social networks

3.1. The importance of the media and trust in it

The post-election survey confirmed that, in the 6 October 2018 election, **television was still the most important form of media for voters – 76% of voters received political information prior to the election from one or more television channels.** However, the influence of television has decreased – younger citizens watch television rarely.

Internet news portals are becoming even more popular in Latvia – political information was consumed by 66% of voters on such portals during the election campaign period. However

internal portals are used comparatively rarely by citizens aged over 64 (30%), and interestingly, by *ZZS* voters as well (34%).

Political information on the radio was listened to by around 52% of citizens prior to the election. Political information on the radio was heard comparatively more often in the countryside. The typical radio listener is a Latvian citizen in the age group 55 and over.

Newspapers and magazines are a traditional form of media from which less than a third of Latvian citizens gain political information. It is important to note that a particularly small number of readers of the printed press are in the age group 18-24; less than 10% of citizens in this age group indicated that they read political information in the printed press prior to the election. Compared with voters for other parties, newspapers were read more often by *ZZS*, *Attīstībai/Par!* and *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* voters.

In terms of voter reach, the top ten most influential media outlets consisted of 6 television stations (LTV1, LNT, TV3, LTV7, TV24, PBK), two internet portals (delfi.lv and tvnet.lv) and two radio stations (LR1 and LR2). It is interesting to note that the audiences of many media channels are not as ethnically divided as is often thought to be the case in Latvia (see the table below). Several broadcasters and written press media have a significant non-Latvian audience.

On the whole, Latvian citizens either trust the media or do not give a verdict on them – when voters were given a list of media channels and asked to mark the ones they do not trust, none of the media was selected by more than 12 percent of respondents.

Television

Television channel, and the proportion of voters who gained political information from this channel during September and October 2018	
LTV1 – 50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTV was watched by 63% of citizens whose families speak in Latvian and by 17% of citizens whose families speak in Russian. This channel was especially influential for <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>PROGRESĪVIE</i> voters (watched by approximately 81% of these parties' voters). Comparatively less influential: for <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> (14%) and <i>Saskaņa</i> (20%) voters. LTV viewers most voted for <i>JKP</i>, <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> in the election. LTV is trusted by 41% of citizens; not trusted – by 8%.
LNT – 40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LNT was watched by 47% of citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 22% of citizens whose families speak in Russian. LNT viewers most often voted for <i>JKP</i>, <i>KPV.LV</i>, <i>Saskaņa</i> and <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> in the election. LNT is trusted by 32% of citizens; not trusted – by 6%.
TV3 – 32%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV3 was watched by 39% of citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 16% of citizens whose families speak in Russian. TV3 viewers most often voted for <i>JKP</i>, <i>KPV.LV</i> and <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> in the election. TV3 is trusted by 26% of citizens; not trusted – by 5%.

LTV7 – 27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTV7 was watched by 27% of citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 25% of citizens whose families speak in Russian. This channel was watched comparatively more by <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> and <i>PROGRESĪVIE</i> voters. LTV7 viewers most often voted for <i>Saskaņa</i> in the election. LTV7 is trusted by 21% of citizens; not trusted – by 6%.
TV24 – 19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV24 was watched by 23% of citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 10% of citizens whose families speak in Russian. This channel was comparatively more important for <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> voters (49%). TV24 viewers most often voted for <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>JKP</i> in the election. TV24 is trusted by 14% of citizens; not trusted – by 7%.
<i>Pirmais Baltijas Kanāls</i> [First Baltic Channel] – 17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBK was watched by 7% of citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 41% of citizens whose families speak in Russian. This channel seemed particularly important for <i>Saskaņa</i> voters (46%); less important – for <i>KPV.LV</i> (3%) and <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> (4%) voters. PBK viewers most often voted for <i>Saskaņa</i>. PBK is trusted by 12% of citizens, and not trusted by 12% also.

Internet portals

Internet portal, and the proportion of voters who gained political information from this portal during September and October 2018	
Delfi.lv – 45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among delfi.lv users during the pre-election campaign, 51% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 29% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. Delfi users most often supported <i>JKP</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i>, <i>KPV.LV</i> and the <i>Saskaņa</i> party in the election. Delfi is trusted by 33% of Latvian citizens; not trusted – by 5%.
Tvnet.lv – 30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among Tvnet users during the pre-election campaign, 37% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 14% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. Tvnet users most often supported <i>JKP</i>, <i>KPV.LV</i> and <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> in the election. Tvnet is trusted by 22% of citizens; not trusted – by 4%.
Rus.delfi.lv – 14%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among Rus.delfi.lv users during the pre-election campaign, 2% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 42% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. Rus.delfi users most often supported <i>Saskaņa</i> and <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> in the election. Rus.delfi is trusted by 11% of citizens; not trusted – by 4%.
Lsm.lv – 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among lsm.lv users during the pre-election campaign, 12% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 5% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. Lsm.lv users most often supported <i>JKP</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> and <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> in the election. Lsm.lv is trusted by 9% of citizens; not trusted – by 2%.
Jauns.lv – 8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among jauns.lv users during the pre-election campaign, 11% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 1% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. Jauns.lv users most often supported <i>KPV.LV</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> and <i>JKP</i> in the election. Jauns.lv is trusted by 6% of citizens; not trusted – by 4%.
Rus.tvnet.lv – 7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among Rus.tvnet.lv users during the pre-election campaign, 2% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 21% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. Rus.tvnet.lv users most often supported <i>Saskaņa</i> in the election. Rus.tvnet.lv is trusted by 5% of citizens; not trusted – by 4%.

Radio

Radio station, and the proportion of voters who gained political information from this station during September and October 2018	
Latvian Radio 1 – 21%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among LR1 listeners during the pre-election campaign, 27% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 6% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. • LR1 listeners most often supported <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i>, <i>JKP</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i>, <i>KPV.LV</i> and <i>ZZS</i> in the election. • LR1 is trusted by 19% of Latvian citizens; not trusted – by 3%.
Latvian Radio 2 – 17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among LR2 listeners during the pre-election campaign, 22% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 4% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. • LR2 listeners most often supported <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i>, <i>JKP</i> and <i>KPV.LV</i>. • LR2 is trusted by 16% of citizens; not trusted – by 3%.
Radio SWH – 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among Radio SWH listeners during the pre-election campaign, 10% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 10% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. • Radio SWH listeners most often supported <i>Saskaņa</i> and <i>KPV.LV</i>. • Radio SWH is trusted by 9% of citizens; not trusted – by 3%.
Latvian Radio 4 – 6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among LR4 listeners during the pre-election campaign, 3% were citizens whose families speak in Latvian and 13% were citizens whose families speak in Russian. • LR4 listeners most often supported <i>Saskaņa</i>. • LR4 is trusted by 6% of citizens; not trusted – by 2%.

Newspapers/magazines

Newspaper/magazine, and the proportion of voters who gained political information from this newspaper/magazine during September and October 2018	
<i>Latvijas Avīze</i> – 7% [Latvia's Newspaper]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Latvijas Avīze</i> readership: Latvians, mainly aged above 45, rural inhabitants. • <i>Latvijas Avīze</i> readers most often voted for <i>KPV.LV</i>, <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>Latvijas Reģionu apvienība</i>. • <i>Latvijas Avīze</i> is trusted by 7% of citizens; not trusted – by 1%.
<i>Diena</i> [Today] – 6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diena</i> readership: Latvians, 35-75 years old, moderately high incomes. • <i>Diena</i> readers most often voted for <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i>, <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>JKP</i>. • <i>Diena</i> is trusted by 5% of citizens; not trusted – by 2%.
Žurnāls <i>IR</i> – 5% [IR Magazine]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Žurnāls <i>IR</i> readership: Latvians, 35-44 years old, high incomes, Riga. • Žurnāls <i>IR</i> readers most often voted for <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i>, <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>JKP</i>. • Žurnāls <i>IR</i> is trusted by 4% of citizens; not trusted – by 1%.
<i>Vesti</i> – 4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vesti</i> readership: non-Latvians, aged around 45-54, average incomes and secondary education. • Readers supported <i>Saskaņa</i> and <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> in the election. • <i>Vesti</i> is trusted by 3% of citizens; not trusted – by 4%.
<i>Dienas Bizness</i> – 2% [Today's Business]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readership: aged 25-54, higher education and high incomes. • Voted for <i>JKP</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> and <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> in the election. • <i>Dienas Bizness</i> is trusted by 2% of citizens; not trusted – by 2%.
<i>NRA</i> – 2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readership: average incomes, Riga. • Voted for <i>JKP</i>, <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> and <i>Saskaņa</i> in the election. • <i>NRA</i> is trusted by 2% of citizens; not trusted – by 3%.

3.2. The importance of social media

Respondents to the post-election survey were asked to mark all the social networks that they actively used (every day or almost every day) in September and the beginning of October 2018. **The proportion of Latvian citizens who currently do not use social media at all: 30%. The remaining 70% of citizens are active users of at least one social network.**

Approximately 55% of Latvian citizens noticed political advertisements on at least one of these social networks. Most often: Facebook (50%), YouTube (13%), Draugiem.lv (8%), Twitter (6%), Instagram (5%), Odnoklassniki (2%) and VKontakte (1%).

Social network, and the proportion of Latvian citizens who are active users of it	
Facebook – 62%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among Latvian citizens aged up to 44, around 80% actively use this social network. • 64% of citizens whose native language is Latvian use Facebook; 55% of Russian native speakers. • 84% of citizens who voted for <i>PROGRESĪVIE</i> use Facebook, but only 30% of citizens who voted for <i>Latvijas Krievu savienība</i> use it. • Facebook users voted for parties in generally similar proportions to the Latvian electorate as a whole.
YouTube – 26%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of citizens aged 18-24 are active YouTube users. • 75% of citizens who voted for <i>PROGRESĪVIE</i> are YouTube users, but only 19% of those who voted for <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> are.
Draugiem.lv – 21%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27% of citizens whose native language is Latvian are active Draugiem.lv users; 8% of Russian native speakers. • The most popular party for Draugiem.lv users was <i>KPV.LV</i>.
Instagram – 15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few <i>Nacionālā apvienība</i> and <i>ZZS</i> voters are Instagram users, but many <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> voters are.
Twitter – 13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14% of citizens whose native language is Latvian are active Twitter users; 11% of Russian native speakers. • Twitter users most often voted for <i>KPV.LV</i>, <i>Saskaņa</i>, <i>Attīstībai/Par!</i> and <i>JKP</i>.
Odnoklassniki – 8% (ok.ru)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% of citizens whose native language is Latvian are active Odnoklassniki users; 22% of Russian native speakers. • Odnoklassniki users mainly voted for the party <i>Saskaņa</i>.
VKontakte – 4% (vk.com)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% of citizens whose native language is Latvian are active VKontakte users; 13% of Russian native speakers. • VKontakte users mainly voted for the party <i>Saskaņa</i>.

3.3. Who are the citizens who do not use the media at all (except for social networks)?

Approximately 8% of Latvian citizens do not use the media at all – neither television, radio, internet news portals nor print media. They are mainly young people – other demographic indicators differ only minimally from those of Latvian citizens in general. This group of voters exhibits the following features when compared with other voters:

- Twice as often did not vote;
- Twice as often noticed a candidate's attempts to persuade voters on social media;
- Noticeably more often considered that Latvia's future is under threat;
- Noticeably more often felt offended by the Latvian state;
- Noticeably more often considered that new rogues are better than old ones.

4 The problem of the 5% threshold

4.1. Which parties had a realistic chance of getting into parliament?

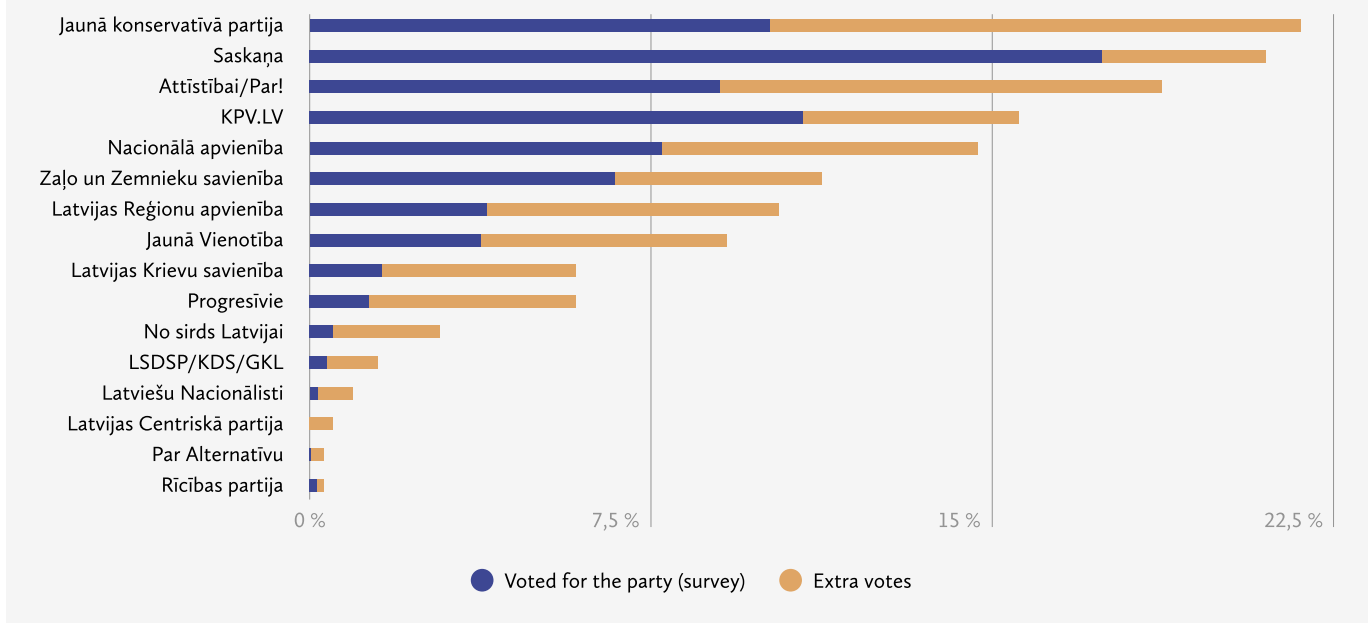
Figure 3 (page 16) shows that **10 parties had a realistic chance of exceeding the 5% threshold and getting into the 13th parliament** – of which 7 did so. A further six parties would not even have got into parliament even if voters had had a second vote and there had not been the important 5% threshold.

Respondents to the post-election survey were asked: which additional party would you have voted for if you had had a second vote and there had not been the 5% threshold? The aim of this question – to determine which parties voters would have most liked to see represented in parliament.

This question also made it possible to determine which parties most competed amongst themselves for one and the same voter's vote. Interestingly, of the 10 most popular parties that received the highest number of votes, the party *Saskaņa* had the lowest potential to attract voters who decided to vote for

Party	Which other votes could they have claimed (from which other parties could they have attracted the most voters)?
JKP	KPV.LV, Attīstībai/Par!, Nacionālā apvienība, ZZS and Saskaņa
Saskaņa	KPV.LV and Latvijas Krievu savienība
Attīstībai/Par!	JKP, KPV.LV, Nacionālā apvienība
KPV.LV	Attīstībai/Par! and JKP
Nacionālā apvienība	JKP and Attīstībai/Par!
ZZS	Saskaņa, JKP and Nacionālā apvienība
Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība	JKP, KPV.LV and Attīstībai/Par!
Jaunā Vienotība	Nacionālā apvienība and Attīstībai/Par!
Latvijas Krievu savienība	Saskaņa
Progresīvie	(In similar proportions) JKP, Attīstībai/Par! and Jaunā Vienotība

Figure 3. Which parties would voters have been prepared to give their second vote to? (percentage of votes)



a different party on 6 October. Only 3,6% of those who voted for other parties would have been prepared to vote for *Saskaņa* as well. However, 12% of other parties' voters would have been prepared to vote also for *JKP*; for *Attīstībai/Par!* – 10%.

According to the post-election survey, 81% of citizens who voted in the 13th parliamentary elections, when choosing a party to vote for, considered it important that the party had a good chance of exceeding the 5% threshold and getting into parliament. Only 13% of citizens did not consider it important. In comparison with other parties, this consideration was less important for *PROGRESĪVIE* voters (for 38% of its voters, the chances of *PROGRESĪVIE* exceeding the 5% threshold did not seem important).

At the same time, the hypothesis can be proposed that, for voters who were deciding between parties which were sure to

exceed the 5% threshold and those which probably would not exceed it, **the vote threshold was precisely the determining factor, in not wanting to vote for an “uncertain party”**. This is indicated by the fact that the potential “second vote” voters for the three parties which did not get into parliament (*Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība*, *Jaunā Krievu savienība* and *PROGRESĪVIE*) particularly often mentioned in the post-election survey that a party's prospects seemed important in deciding who to vote for. If a party's chances of exceeding the 5% threshold seemed important on average for 81% of participants in the 6 October election, then for the potential extra (second vote) supporters of these three parties, it seemed so in 85-93% of cases.

A high proportion of voters made their final decision about who to support during the final week – for example, this was the case for 39% of *Latvijas Krievu savienība* potential extra (second vote) supporters, 46% of *Latvijas Reģionu*

Apvienība potential extra (second vote) supporters, and 69% of PROGRESĪVIE party's second choice voters. **This means that the last week before the election was particularly important to these parties' chances.**

In this context, the decision of the Administrative District Court, which obliged LTV1 to include representatives of *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* in the final prime ministerial candidate debates, should be noted⁴. The post-election survey data confirms that, for *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* voters, the performance of party candidates in the pre-election debates seemed particularly important in deciding who to vote for. That allows one to assume that *Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība* would have had a worse result if participation in the prime ministerial discussion had been denied. Equally believable is the hypothesis that PROGRESĪVIE party's election result would have been better if their prime ministerial candidate Roberts Putnis had participated in the candidate debates – in comparison with other prime ministerial candidates, PROGRESĪVIE party's candidate was noticed by few voters.

4.2. How well did the media present party popularity ratings?

In the last month before the 13th parliamentary election (from 6 September to 6 October), PROVIDUS conducted monitoring of the Latvian public media with the aim of determining how they presented and analysed political party ratings. During the course of the monitoring, written, audio and video materials were analysed – in total, the number of files obtained for this time period was 495. The information obtained was analysed qualitatively, evaluating content according to its text and

4 <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/tiesa-liek-ltv-debates-ieklaud-latvijas-regionu-apvienibas-premjera-amata-kandidatu.a294882/>

purpose, and 100 randomly selected publications (out of 495) were analysed for the relevant time period. Publications in both Latvian and Russian language were used in the media monitoring.

In evaluating all the pieces of material obtained (495), several tendencies were repeatedly observed, irrespective of the language, form and date of publication.

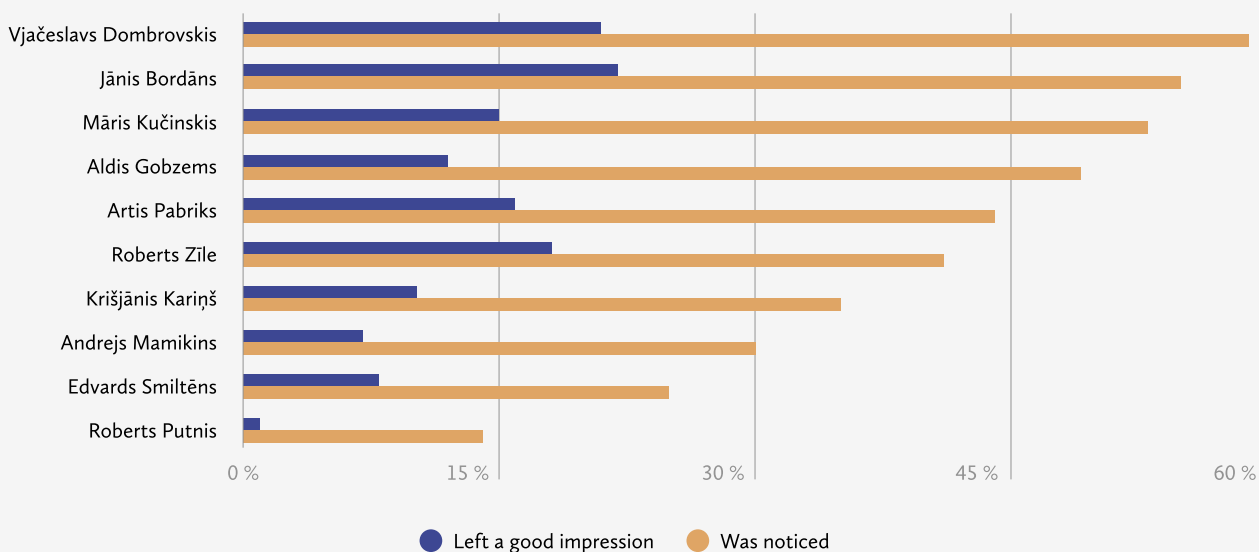
Firstly, **the media published party popularity ratings without warning the audience that they are not election result forecasts.** In many cases, journalists forecast election results referring only to the latest ratings, but taking into account other relevant factors (statistical error, potential limitations of the rating method, change of voters' opinions).

Secondly, **publications and reports generally did not mention who performed the party popularity survey on which the election forecast was based.** In publications – articles, programmes and interviews – forecasts were quite often made assuming which parties will or will not get into parliament and how many seats they will win, but it was not stated which of the party ratings (such as SKDS, Kantar TNS, Factum, etc.) these assumptions were based on. As can be seen in the table below, party ratings prior to the 6 October 2018 election differed.

The third tendency – **parties were denied participation in discussions or other events, as well as excluded from election analysis materials, because they had not exceeded a particular arbitrarily defined threshold in one of the public opinion surveys, such as support from 2,5% of voters.** Some of the media referred to outdated party popularity indicators – for example, surveys which were conducted more than a month before Election Day. **As the post-election survey for the 6 October 2018 election shows – only a third of voters made their final voting decision more than a month before the election.**

Similarly, the media rarely took into account that a party

Figure 4. Prime ministerial candidates: which were noticed and which left a good impression? (percentage of citizens)



popularity rating is not a single number but a range. This means that if a media organisation has set the condition for being invited to discussions to be popularity of at least 2% in one of the public opinion surveys, then those parties whose popularity ratings might be above 2% should be invited, taking into account the distribution of statistical error (for example, also including a party whose rating is 1,8%).

By analysing in more depth 100 randomly selected publications about political party ratings (written, video, audio), it was evaluated whether, in presenting the political party ratings, they covered the following factors which are important in enabling the reader or viewer to draw their own conclusions about the credibility of the ratings: a) who performed the survey; b) the time of the survey; c) the sample size; d) survey sample characterising factors; e) the survey method (telephone interview, face-to-face interview, online interview); f) the formulation of the question asked; g) geographical coverage.

Most often – 35% of the time – the publication analysed did not mention any of the seven factors which characterise the public opinion survey and enable the voters to judge for themselves whether the survey in question can be trusted.

For example, the publication would state that party X will get into parliament but party Y will not exceed the 5% threshold required to do so, but it would not show which political ratings the statement was based on. Slightly less often – 32% of the time – the publication provided one of the factors (most often – who conducted the survey). Notably less often – 14% of the time – the publication stated who conducted the survey, the time period, and what survey was done. Even rarer – 8% of the time – the aforementioned factors were covered as well as how the survey was conducted (telephone interview, face-to-face interview, online interview). Only 5% of publications indicated and included all of the above-mentioned criteria.

The table below summarises the party popularity ratings of five survey organisations which were published prior to the election. As can be seen – the ratings differed.

	ACTUAL ELECTION RESULTS	SKDS RATINGS (30/09)	Latvijas Fakti RATINGS (28/09)	Kantar TNS RATINGS (04/10)	Norstat RATINGS (01/10)	Factum RATINGS (30/09)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SASKAŅA	19,8	17,2	17,9	14,5	12,7	21
KPV LV	14,3	6,2	9,2	7,6	8,4	12
JKP	13,6	5,2	5,5	5,7	7,7	15
A/PAR	12	5	6,1	5,3	2,6	13
NA	11	6,9	5,4	6,6	6	12
ZZS	9,9	9,4	11,1	8,1	10,70	11
JV	6,7	3,8	5,1	4,1	6,1	9
LRA	4,1	2,2	2,6	x	1,4	x
LKS	3,2	1,7	1,1	x	0,8	x
PRO	2,6	1,2	1,1	2,4	2,1	x
NSL	0,8	1,5	x	x	1,3	x
LN	0,5	0,3	x	x	x	x
PAR/ALT	0,3	0,4	x	x	x	x
LSDSP	0,2	0,4	x	x	x	x
RP	0,1	0,3	x	x	0,2	x
LCA	0,1	0,2	x	x	x	x

Taking into account that, for several parties, a majority of voters made their final voting decision only in the final week prior to the election, and that in the post-election survey, 81% of Latvian citizens indicated that, in choosing a party to vote for, its chances of exceeding the 5% threshold were important, **the work of the media with party popularity ratings during the pre-election period should be more responsible:**

- In selecting parties for participation in the discussions or in-depth analysis, only the latest party popularity indicators should be taken into account, and furthermore, by adding

voters' "first" and "second" votes together. Otherwise, the 5% threshold becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: voters do not vote for a particular party because they fear that it will not exceed the 5% threshold, however the party would exceed it if the voters were not afraid of the threshold.

- Regarding presenters of party popularity indicators, the media should provide the audience with enough contextual information (about the methodology used) in order to allow voters to make an informed opinion in evaluating the indicators.