

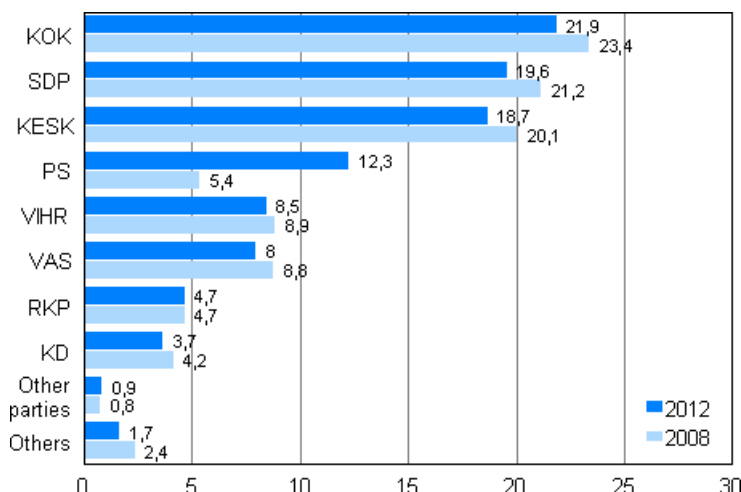
# Municipal elections 2012

## Preliminary data

### *Preliminary data: Coalition Party retained its position as the largest political party, True Finns the biggest winners in Municipal elections 2012*

The Coalition Party retained its position as the biggest political party in the country which it had assumed in the previous Municipal elections. The Coalition Party took 21.9 per cent of all votes but lost its share of votes cast by 1.6 per cent compared with the previous Municipal elections. The total number of votes cast for the Coalition Party was 545,000, which was 53,000 votes less than in the 2008 Municipal elections. The data are based on Statistics Finland's statistics on the Municipal elections 2012.

**Support for parties in Municipal elections 2012 and 2008, %**



Other parties in 2012: Communist Party of Finland (SKP), Pirate Party (Pirate Pty), Independence Party (IP), Communist Worker's Party (KTP), Change 2011, Finnish Labour Party (STP), For the Poor (KA), Liberty Party (Liberty Pty) Other parties in 2008: Communist Party of Finland (SKP), Independence Party (IP), Communist Worker's Party (KTP), Finnish Labour Party (STP), Finnish Seniors' Party (SSP), For the Poor (KA) Others in 2012 and 2008: Constituency associations

The Social Democratic Party gained the second most votes and retained its position as the second largest political party in Finland. It took 19.6 per cent of all votes cast and lost 1.7 percentage points of support. The total number of votes cast for the SDP was around 487,000, which was 54,000 down from the previous Municipal elections.

The Centre Party of Finland kept its position as the third biggest party in Finland. Support for the Centre Party was 18.7 per cent and it lost 1.4 percentage points of support when compared to the preceding elections. The Centre Party took a total of 465,000 votes, which was 47,000 votes less than in 2008.

The True Finns emerged as the biggest winners in the elections as they increased their support the most of all parties and became the fourth largest party. Support for the True Finns now stood at 12.3 per cent, which was 7.0 percentage points more than in the preceding Municipal elections. The 307,000 votes taken by the True Finns indicated an increase of as much as 170,000 votes from 2008.

The Green League gained 8.5 per cent of all votes, which was 0.4 percentage points lower than in the previous Municipal elections. The Left Alliance took 8.0 per cent of all votes cast and lost 0.8 percentage points of support compared with the previous Municipal elections.

Voting turnout was distinctly lower in these elections than in the preceding Municipal elections. The voting percentage in the whole country stood at 58.2, having been 61.2 in 2008. A total of 42.4 per cent of all voters cast their vote in advance in the Municipal elections 2012.

### ***Statistics Finland's election result services***

Before the elections on 18 October 2012, Statistics Finland released a review on the background of municipal election candidates analysing the candidates' sex distribution, age, origin, education, employment, income level and family status in comparison to persons entitled to vote. The review will be supplemented on 2 November with background data on the elected councillors in connection with the release of the confirmed election results.

On 29 October 2012, Statistics Finland will open a free of charge election map service on the web containing data illustrated by maps and charts on the Municipal elections. The themes include voting turnout, the party with the most votes and support for parties and change in the support and the proportion of young, female and new councillors. The data can be browsed by various area categories such as municipalities, constituencies and the largest towns by voting district. The map data will be updated with the confirmed election results on 2 November 2012.

More detailed election result data are available in Statistics Finland's PX-Web database service where users can compile customised statistical tables on the elections. Database tables on the preliminary Municipal election data will be produced on 29 October 2012. Database tables according to the confirmed results of the Municipal elections will be released on 2 November 2012.

[Election map service](#)

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## *Appendix tables*

### **Voting turnout in the Municipal elections in 1972-2012, %**

Year	Voting percentage (of persons entitled to vote)	Advance voting percentage (of all persons entitled to vote)
1972	75.6	5.3
1976	78.5	6.8
1980	78.1	8.0
1984	74.0	9.2
1988	70.5	18.3
1992	70.9	38.1
1996	61.3	34.9
2000	55.9	37.7
2004	58.6	39.1
2008	61.2	39.9
2012	58.2	42.4

# *Municipal elections, quality description*

## *1. Relevance of statistical information*

### **1.1 Summary of the information content of statistics**

Statistics Finland produces official statistics from municipal elections containing key data on the candidates, elected councillors, those entitled to vote, those who voted and support gained by the parties. Statistics Finland's statistics pages on municipal elections also provide analyses on the backgrounds of the candidates and the elected, and as separate services the election map service and the StatFin online service.

### **1.2 Essential concepts**

#### *Holding of elections*

Municipal elections are held every four years on the fourth Sunday in October. In the municipalities of the autonomous territory of the Åland Islands elections ([www.val.ax](http://www.val.ax)) are also arranged every four years, but one year ahead of those in Mainland Finland. Elections are held in accordance with the Election Act in force, more details on the Ministry of Justice's web pages [www.vaalit.fi](http://www.vaalit.fi) (=> Legislation) and [www.finlex.fi](http://www.finlex.fi), Election Act (714/1998). In municipal elections advance voting was possible abroad for the first time in 2000.

#### *Legislation on elections*

The first act concerning municipal elections was enacted in 1917. With the revision of election legislation in 1998 all provisions on elections were collected into one single act, the Election Act (714/1998), which entered into force on 8 October 1998. The provisions concerning municipal elections are included in it and in the Local Government Act (365/1995).

#### *The main principles of holding elections*

All elections in Finland are held according to the following principles:

- **The elections are direct.** Electors (those entitled to vote) vote direct for the person they want to be elected.
- **The elections are proportional.** In proportional elections each party or other group gains seats in relation to the votes cast for it compared with the votes cast for other groups (not in presidential elections).
- **The elections are secret.** Secrecy of the ballot means that neither the election authorities nor anyone else get to know for whom voters have cast their votes or whether they have returned an empty ballot.
- **The right to vote is universal and equal.** Universal franchise means that the right to vote only depends on requirements which citizens usually fulfil. Equal franchise means that every person entitled to vote has an equal right to influence the election results. In general elections everybody has one vote.
- **Voting is personal.** The right to vote may not be used through an agent.
- **Voting must take place in front of election authorities.**
- The Finnish election system is a combination of voting for individuals and parties, where a vote goes to both a party and a person (not in presidential elections).

#### *Right to vote and voting register, voting and calculation of the election result*

##### *Right to vote*

Entitled to vote in municipal elections are:

1. Citizens of Finland or another Member State of the European Union as well as of Iceland and Norway who have reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election, and whose municipality of residence, as defined by law, is the municipality in question on the 51st day before election day, and
2. Other foreigners who have reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election, and whose municipality of residence, as defined by law, is the municipality in question on the 51st day before election day, and who at that time have had a municipality of residence in Finland for an uninterrupted period of two years.

### *Voting register*

The Population Register Centre compiles a computer register of everyone entitled to vote (voting register) 46 days before the election day. This register contains certain information on the voters (including the voters' name, identity code, constituency, municipality of residence and polling station) as this information appears in the Population Information System 51 days before the election day. The voting register is established on 12 September 2012 based on the information included in the Population Information System on 7 September 2012.

The voting register is publicly available at the local register offices (maistraatti) from 41 days before the election day onwards (i.e. from 17 September 2012). In addition, everyone in the register is sent a notice of his or her right to vote (card of information) not later than 24 days before the election day (4 October 2012). The card states among other things the election day, the days for advance voting, the address of the polling station of the recipient and the addresses and telephone numbers of the election authorities. The voting register is later used to print out electoral rolls for the polling stations on the election day.

Claims for correction of the register have to be submitted to the local register offices not later than 16 days (12 October 2012) before the election day and the local register office will decide the claims not later than 13 days before the election day.

The voting register becomes legally valid at noon 12 days prior to the election day, that is, on Tuesday 16 October 2012 at noon.

### *Voting*

Persons with a right to vote can vote either 1) during advance voting, or 2) on the election Sunday.

Advance votes in Finland (17 to 23 October 2012) are cast in general advance polling stations, in institutions and at voters' home under certain conditions. General advance polling stations in Finland are offices, post offices and other locations specified by municipalities. Advance votes abroad (17 to 20 October 2012) are cast at Finnish embassies and their trade missions and Finnish vessels. General advance polling stations abroad are the Finnish embassies and their trade missions specified in a Government decree. Each person entitled to vote can vote in advance in general advance polling stations in Finland and abroad at Finnish embassies.

On the election day an enfranchised person may vote only in the polling station of his or her own voting district.

A voter need not give grounds for advance voting, but may freely choose between voting in advance or voting on the election day. Advance voting commences on the 11th day (17 October 2012) and ends abroad on the 8th day (20 October 2012) and in Finland on the 5th day (23 October 2012) before the election day.

*Voting percentage = proportion of voters of persons entitled to vote*

### *Calculation of the result of the municipal elections*

#### Counting the advance votes

Municipalities' central election committees begin counting the advance votes on the election day at 3 pm at the earliest (for a particular reason at noon at the earliest). The brown ballot envelopes sent from the municipalities are opened and the ballots within them are counted. Advance votes are counted so that the result of advance voting should be ready by 8 pm that evening. Before this the central election committees may not reveal anything on how the counting is progressing.

#### Counting the votes on the election day

As soon as the doors of the polling stations have been closed at 8 pm, the election board begins a preliminary count of the votes. The board opens the ballot box, counts the ballots within it, and notes down the votes of the candidates in a particular election protocol. Immediately thereafter the board informs the central election committee of the municipality of the votes of the candidates, i.e. of the election results in the voting district. The central election committee again enters the results in the central calculation system in the Election Information System of the Ministry of Justice. Finally, the election board seals the ballots in a parcel and delivers it to the central election committee before Monday morning at 9 am.

#### Determination of the election results

The so-called d'Hondt method is used to determine the election results. Thus, in the first stage of the calculation the total number of votes of each group, i.e.

- A (single) party not belonging to an electoral alliance,
- An electoral alliance,
- A joint list, and
- A constituency association not belonging to a joint list,

is counted. Parties which have formed an electoral alliance are thus treated as a single group, as are constituency associations on a joint list. In the second stage of the calculation the candidates in each group are ranked in order of their personal number of votes. In the third stage each candidate is accorded a comparative index, i.e. the candidate who has received most personal votes is accorded an index which equals the total number of votes of the group, the second best candidate half of that, the third best a third, the fourth best a fourth, and so on. In the final stage all candidates within the municipality are listed in order from best to worst according to their comparative index, and the councillors elected from the municipality are chosen from this list.

#### *Eligibility and nomination of candidates*

##### *Eligibility*

Eligible as candidates in municipal elections are persons,

1. Whose municipality of residence is the municipality in question,
2. Who are entitled to vote in municipal elections in some municipality, and
3. Who are not under guardianship (legally incompetent).

Section 34 of the Local Government Act prescribes the restrictions to eligibility.

As a rule, eligibility is determined in the same schedule as the right to vote, that is, according to the information drawn from the Population Register Centre's Population Information System 51 days prior to the day of the election (in the 2012 Municipal elections by Friday 7 September). If the person changes his or her municipality of residence after that date, his or her eligibility follows with him or her. The legislation has not set a clear deadline for the determination of eligibility of candidates but in practice, candidates' municipality of residence has to be clear at the latest on the 32nd day prior to the day of the election (in the 2012 Municipal election by Wednesday 26 September), when the central election committees handle and decide the additions made to the candidate applications. Decisions on the candidates' municipality of residence are made based on the information in the Population Information System.

##### *Nomination of candidates*

Candidates in municipal elections may be nominated by

1. Parties entered in the party register and
2. Constituency associations established by people entitled to vote.

Each party may nominate a number of candidates equalling the number of councillors to be elected multiplied by one and a half. For example, if 27 councillors are elected in the municipality, the party may have at most 40 candidates. Parties may form electoral alliances, but the number of candidates nominated by an alliance may not exceed the maximum number of candidates for a single party.

A constituency association for the nomination of one candidate may be established by at least ten people who are entitled to vote in the municipality. By a decree of the Ministry of Justice (in the 2012 Municipal elections Decree 237/2012), in some small municipalities a constituency association may, however, be established by five or at least three persons entitled to vote. Constituency associations may form joint lists with a maximum number of candidates equalling the number of councillors to be elected multiplied by one and a half.

The central election committee compiles a combined list of candidates in which the candidates of all parties, constituency associations and joint lists are enumerated in an order drawn by lot. The list contains the following information on the candidates: number (beginning with number 2), name, municipality of residence and title, profession or position.

The number of councillors elected depends on the population of the municipality (the situation at the end of May in the election year). At the beginning of 2013, the number of municipalities is 304 in Mainland Finland and 16 in Åland. According to Section 10 of the Local Government Act (365/1995), the number of councillors varies as follows:

#### **Number of councillors according to the population of the municipality**

Population	No. of councillors
at most 2,000	17*
2,001 - 4,000	21
4,001 - 8,000	27
8,001 - 15,000	35
15,001 - 30,000	43
30,001 - 60,000	51
60,001 - 120,000	59
120,001 - 250,000	67
250,001 - 400,000	75
over 400,000	85

\* The municipality may decide that the number of councillors elected will be 13 or 15.

#### *Changes in constituencies and municipalities and consolidations of municipalities*

Changes in constituencies and municipalities and consolidations of municipalities concerning elections of different years are presented on the Internet in the Classifications section (on the home page for Municipal elections).

Municipalities are placed into constituencies according to the constituency division in force.

The valid statistical grouping of municipalities is used in the statistics (Statistics Finland, Municipalities and Regional Divisions Based on Municipalities). The changes in municipalities entering into force at the beginning of the year following the elections are taken into account in the statistics on municipal elections, because the elections are held following the coming municipal division. In the statistical grouping of municipalities, municipalities are divided by the proportion of the population living in urban settlements and by the population of the largest urban settlement into urban, semi-urban and rural municipalities. The classification is based on the definition of urban settlements made in 201x and the population of the municipality in 201x. The definition of urban settlements is produced yearly by the Finnish Environment Institute.

1. Urban municipalities are those municipalities in which at least 90 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements, or in which the population of the largest urban settlement is at least 15,000.
2. Semi-urban municipalities are those municipalities in which at least 60 per cent but less than 90 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements, or in which the population of the largest urban settlement is at least 4,000 but less than 15,000.
3. Rural municipalities are those municipalities in which less than 60 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements, and in which the population of the largest urban settlement is less than 15,000, as well as those municipalities in which at least 60 per cent but less than 90 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements, and in which the population of the largest urban settlement is less than 4,000.

#### *Classifications used*



Statistics Finland's classification of municipalities, constituency, municipality group, municipality, voting district, party (entered in the Party Register), age of candidates and elected councillors, country of residence.

*Candidates have been nominated in the Municipal elections 2012 by the following registered parties:*

- The Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP)
- Centre Party of Finland (KESK)
- National Coalition Party (KOK)
- Swedish People's Party in Finland (RKP)
- Christian Democrats in Finland (KD)
- Green League (VIHR)
- Left Alliance (VAS)
- True Finns (PS)
- Finnish Labour Party (STP)
- Independence Party (IP)
- For the Poor (KA)
- Pirate Party of Finland
- Change 2011
- Liberty Party - Future of Finland
- The Communist Party of Finland (SKP)
- For Peace and Socialism – Communist Workers Party (Finland) (KTP)

#### *Data collection methods and data sources*

Statistics Finland receives basic election data from the Ministry of Justice's election data system, the technical implementation of which is assigned to Tieto.

#### **1.3 Acts, decrees and recommendations**

The function of Statistics Finland is to compile statistics describing conditions in society (Statistics Finland Act of 24 January 1992/48). These also include election statistics. Statistics Finland's Rules of Procedure define the Population Statistics Department as the producer of election statistics (Statistics Finland's Rules of Procedure, TK-00-1469-00).

## **2. Methodological description of survey**

The statistics are based on census data. The basic data of the statistics are based on the Ministry of Justice's election information system consisting of six subsystems. They are:

1. Basic data, including data on constituencies, municipalities, voting districts and election authorities;
2. Data on polling stations (polling station register), which include data on general advance polling stations and polling stations on the election day;
3. Franchise data (voting register), for which data on every person entitled to vote are collected by the Population Register Centre 46 days before the election day. This register contains certain information on the voters (including the voters' name, identity code, constituency, municipality of residence, and polling station) as this information appears in the Population Information System 51 days before the election day. The voting register becomes legally valid at noon 12 days prior to the election day;
4. Data on candidates (candidate register) in which the following data on each candidate in the elections are entered: name, candidate number, profession, municipality of residence, party/voters' association that has nominated the candidate, and personal identity code;
5. A centralised calculation system to which the electoral district committees and the central election committees submit their results of the elections;
6. A statistical and information service system by means of which the results of the elections and other statistical data are transmitted to the media and to Statistics Finland.

Statistics Finland's election data system comprises four election data files: regional file, party file, candidate file and candidate register.

#### **Background analysis of candidates and elected councillors**

The analysis is based on the data derived from the voting register (Population Register Centre) and on the candidate register (Ministry of Justice) and on the results of the preliminary calculation as well as on Statistics Finland's employment statistics data.

In connection with the election statistics, a background analysis is produced on persons entitled to vote, candidates nominated by the parties and elected representatives. The population of persons entitled to vote is based on the voting register established on 12 September 2012 and the candidates on the candidate register of the Ministry of Justice. The background data on the persons combined with these registers are based on statistical data from Statistics Finland's Population Statistics Department, such as employment statistics, the Register of Completed Education and Degrees and family statistics.

The analysis describes the persons entitled to vote, candidates and elected representatives with regard to certain variables. Employed persons in 2009/2010 according to employment statistics are also included as comparative data in some figures/tables. The background data derive from years year 2009 to 2011. The person's age is the age on the day of the election in full years.

The background variables used in the analysis are described in the following.

#### *Constituency*

The constituency used in the analysis is for the candidates the one for which the person stands as a candidate. For those entitled to vote the constituency is based on the information drawn from the Population Register Centre's Population Information System 51 days prior to the day of the election.

#### *Foreign background*

Foreign background is viewed by means of two variables, that is, native language or origin. Persons whose native language is not Finnish, Swedish or Sami are regarded by language as coming from a foreign background. Persons whose both parents were born abroad are regarded by origin as coming from a foreign background. The data are from the year 2011.

#### *Main type of activity*

The concept of main type of activity describes the nature of the person's economic activity. The population is divided by their main type of activity to the active and inactive population. These groups can be further divided into sub-groups. The classification is based on the person's activity during the last week of the year. The main type of activity is based on data derived from different registers.

The classification of main type of activity is as follows:

- Employed
- Unemployed
- 0 to 14-year-olds
- Students, pupils
- Pensioners
- Conscripts, conscientious objectors
- Other inactive population

The information used in the analysis describes the person's activity during the last week of 2010.

#### *Family status*

In this analysis the population is divided into the following groups by family status:

- Parent of a married/cohabiting family
- Single parent
- Childless couple
- Not belonging to a family
- Youth living at home

Parents of a married/cohabiting family include all married and cohabiting persons and partners in a registered partnership who have their own and/or spouse's children living at home. Childless couples are married/cohabiting persons and partners in a registered partnership who have no children. Young people

living with their own or adopted parent/s having the status of a child are defined as the youth living at home. Those not belonging to a family are usually persons living alone but also a lone mother/father living with her/his child's family is counted as not belonging to a family.

The data on the person's family status are from the year 2011.

#### *Number of children*

In the analysis the number of children used is the number of the person's biological children. The data are from the year 2011.

#### *Level of education*

Those with basic level education have at most nine years of education. They have qualifications from primary schools, middle schools or comprehensive schools.

Those with upper secondary level education have 11 to 12 years of education. These qualifications include matriculation examination, vocational qualifications attained in one to three years and initial vocational qualifications.

Lowest level tertiary education lasts two to three years after upper secondary level education. Examples of these qualifications include the qualification of a technician engineer, diploma in business and administration, and diploma in nursing, which are not polytechnic qualifications.

Completion of lower-degree level tertiary education requires three to four years of full-time studies after upper secondary level education. Lower-degree level tertiary education comprises polytechnic degrees and lower university degrees.

Completion of higher-degree level tertiary education requires as a rule five to six years of full-time studies after upper secondary level education. Higher-degree level tertiary education leads to master's degrees and specialist's degrees in medicine, for instance.

Completion of doctorate or equivalent level tertiary education requires independent research work or doctorate theses fit for publication. The degrees are scientific licentiate and doctorate degrees.

The data on education are derived from Statistics Finland's Register of Completed Education and Degrees. The data used in the analysis concern the year 2010.

#### *Income subject to state taxation*

With certain exceptions, all income received as money or a benefit of monetary value is taxable. Certain social benefits, allowances and compensations are not taxable. These are such as child benefits, housing allowances and income support. Taxable are neither grants and awards received from the general government.

The data are based on the National Board of Taxes' data in the tax database concerning income subject to state taxation. The data used in the analysis concern the year 2010.

#### *Median income*

When income receivers are put in the order of size by income, median income is the income of the middle income receiver. An equal number of income earners remain on both sides of the middle income receiver. Median income is not as sensitive to extreme observations as mean income.

### **3. Correctness and accuracy of data**

The basic data of the election statistics derive from the Ministry of Justice's election data system and from data supplied by the election authorities, which can be considered reliable.

### **4. Timeliness and accuracy of data**

The confirmed data always differ somewhat from the figures of the preliminary statistics.

The results change once the result is confirmed in all respects: by voting district, municipality, constituency, party and number of votes gained by all candidates and by the elected, whereby even their mutual order may change.

### ***5. Accessibility and transparency/clarity of data***

The statistics are released on the Internet, in the StatFin online service and on the statistics pages on Municipal elections. Election data by municipality and voting district and the numbers of votes gained by the candidates and elected are entered into the StatFin online service.

Releases and time series tables in addition to the tables concerning the elections in question are available in three languages (Finnish, Swedish and English) on the statistics pages on Municipal elections.

Key election results on municipal elections are published in the election map service.

The chargeable ALTIKA regional database contains results on municipal elections starting from 1976.

### ***6. Comparability of statistics***

The municipal classification of the year following the election year is used in the statistics. The new statistical grouping of municipalities (urban, semi-urban and rural) was introduced starting from the year 2000. Prior to that, municipalities were grouped as follows: towns and other municipalities. Changes in constituencies and municipalities between elections have been taken into account in statistics which contain comparative data with the previous elections.

Election results are presented on the statistics pages on Municipal elections from 1921 onwards.

### ***7. Coherence and consistency/uniformity and documentation***

The Ministry of Justice publishes exhaustive information about different elections and the national candidate register and election result data on its web pages ([www.vaalit.fi](http://www.vaalit.fi)). The statistics on advance voters published by the Ministry of Justice differ from Statistics Finland's statistics on advance voters, because they are defined on different grounds:

- The Ministry of Justice counts the number of advance voters from the number of those entitled to vote, whereas
- Statistics Finland counts the number of advance voters from the number of all persons who voted.

The classifications used in the statistics can be found on Statistics Finland's website.

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Source: Municipal Elections 2012, preliminary data, Statistics Finland