



Online voting in elections - what do people really think?

Estonia is the only European country to allow online voting and last week, in our online poll we asked if you wanted to vote using the internet. The results are in and while 30% agreed outright and another 18% said they would vote online if they could be sure it was safe, a majority of 52% still prefer the trip to the polling booth. Opinion was also split among MEPs as to its merits.

In the 2007 parliamentary elections in Estonia, 30,000 people voted online, accounting for 5.4% of the votes. People were armed with an electronic ID card, a device to read the card and of course a computer.

There were no accusations of fraud and interestingly, internet votes made up 17% of votes cast before the election.

Estonian Socialist Katrin Saks is positive about the experience. Although not an e-voter herself she said, "e-voting brings in young voters who normally would be passive. It also helps people who travel a lot."

Could we see electronic voting in future EP elections

To those concerned with security, she said, "it is possible to minimize the threats, for example in Estonia you can change your vote on the day in polling station. This is to avoid possible pressure at work."

However, French Socialist Roselyne Lefrançois said: "I prefer that citizens really go to the polls because it remains a citizen action. It's better than staying at home to vote in front of a computer."

Last year in Finland electronic voting was allowed for municipal elections and Eva-Riitta Siitonen thinks it adds to democracy "when it is carried out safely and so that it reaches everyone".

The EPP-ED member said "it would be easier to organise, if we all had an electronic ID card". She sees real possibilities of it being used for future European elections.