



Connecting Parliamentarians

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS' CONGRESS

REPORT



UK Parliamentary General Election 2019

This report contains the findings of the International Parliamentarians' Congress Delegation who visited the United Kingdom in order to observe General Elections which were held on December 12, 2019.



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PRESIDENT

Message of the President



We live in a world faced with emerging challenges such as climate change, ecological depletion, food insecurity, human rights violations, economic disparity, malnutrition and the spread of disease. As representatives of the people, Members of Parliament owe the primary responsibility to leave no stone unturned for dealing with these challenges in an effective and efficient manner.

There was a dire need for a dedicated forum that seeks to empower, enable, connect, rally together and encourage individual Members of Parliament to perform a proactive role in countries and nations' quest to find solutions of key global and regional challenges. Hence there arose the need for establishing a robust, interactive, well-connected, progressively deliberative multilateral platform for parliamentarians across the world to work together for finding solutions to these global issues.

It is a matter of profound privilege for me that I have been vested with the responsibility to lay the foundations of the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC). I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Secretariat who worked diligently to materialize the idea in such a short span of time. Building upon its expertise in the areas of administration, finance, research and legislation, the Secretariat came up with a Constitution as a reference document that contains necessary provisions with regard to vision as well as basic structure. The crafters of the constitution also envisaged the formation of thematic committees in order to look into common global issues in detail. The purpose of the committees is to prepare reports, recommend and propose policies in the functional areas under their jurisdiction to the IPC General Assembly and perform other functions as recommended by the Governing Board and the Assembly.

As the world's oldest democracy, the United Kingdom entered the phase of mid-term elections amidst the debate on the Brexit issue; I felt the need to engage the IPC's standing committee on Monitoring and Observation of Elections in the World to observe these elections. Thus, a two member IPC delegation observed the elections day to prepare a report which is being disseminated to the Parliaments through speakers and presiding officers in addition to Election Commissions world over to trigger a debate on best practices and reforms in electoral processes the world over. It is a matter of privilege and honor for me to present the report of the International Parliamentarians Congress, which is based on the finding of the IPC delegation who visited the United Kingdom during the election as international accredited observers recognized by the Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom.

Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani

President

International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC)

International Parliamentarians' Congress – an introduction

The International Parliamentarians' Congress is an organization of individual Members of Parliament (MPs) belonging to National legislatures of any country across the world. It is a unique platform aimed at bringing together parliamentarians from around the world not just as regional or national representatives, but more so as global parliamentarians and representatives of the whole humanity.

Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani is the President of the IPC for a period of two years. As enshrined in its Constitution, the Congress envisions conceptualizing, strategizing, and implementing ideas of peace, prosperity and progress in the world through cooperation, mutual understanding, and exchange of expertise among parliamentarians. President IPC conceived it to be a worldwide network of individual Members of Parliament who voluntarily intend to work in unison with the single aim to achieve a prosperous and peaceful world through effective independent interaction among parliamentarians.

The Congress operates six Standing Committees, which include: i) Standing Committee on Climate Change and Food Security; ii) Standing Committee on Human Rights; iii) Standing Committee on Peace, Security, Conflict Resolution and Interfaith Harmony; iv) Standing Committee on Trade, Investment and Developmental Cooperation; v) Standing Committee on Health Research, Standardization and Quality Control, and Human Development; and Standing Committee on Monitoring and Observation of Elections in the World.

Headquartered in the capital city of Pakistan, i.e. Islamabad, the Congress aims to establish cooperation, synergy and strategies across international MPs to strengthen democracy, and achieve a prosperous and peaceful world through effective independent dialogue among parliamentarians. The main organs of the Congress include General Assembly, the Governing Board, and a Secretariat. Countries around the world are classified in five major geopolitical groups i.e. i) Africa; ii) Americas; iii) Central Asia, South Asia and South West Asia; iv) East Asia and South East Asia; and v) Europe and Oceania; and similarly the six thematic committees are represented by all regions.

Acknowledgements

International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC) is a transcontinental platform of individual members of national Parliaments across the globe united in purpose to jointly resolve global and regional issues that invariably impact the whole humanity. Constituted through a Resolution adopted by the Senate of Pakistan on 29th August 2019, the IPC crystallizes into reality the vision of Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, to bring together parliamentarians of different countries to achieve peace, prosperity and progress through cooperation; mutual understanding; sharing and exchange of ideas as well as experiences.

The Electoral Commission UK invited the delegation of IPC for briefing and observing 2019 UK Parliamentary General Elections. The briefing event was primarily aimed to provide an overview of all aspects of the election including how the poll is delivered, who can vote, the count process and the financial rules for political parties and other campaigners. It was a unique opportunity to hear directly from the chair of the Electoral Commission, Sir John Holmes, in the days leading up to the polls.

Honorable Senator Kauda Babar, member of the IPC Committee on Monitoring and Observation of Elections in the world and Mr. Hyder Ali Sundrani, Assistant Secretary General IPC, participated as International Accredited Observers for the UK Parliamentary General Election 2019.

The delegation visited many constituencies of United Kingdom including London (Central and East) and Westminster including Westminster North. We are grateful to the Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom for providing us the opportunity to become part of the team of international observers and experience the ensuing electoral process which took place in December 2019.

We welcome the invaluable feedback of readers; feel free to contact us at the <https://ipc.org.pk/>.

Hyder Ali Sundrani
Assistant Secretary General
International Parliamentarians' Congress

Abbreviations

(A)RO	Acting Returning Officer
EC	Electoral Commission
ERO	Electoral Registration Officer
FPTP	First Past the Post
GB	Great Britain
IPC	International Parliamentarians' Congress
MP	Member of Parliament
PPERA	Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act
RO	Returning Officer
SMD	Single Member District
UK	United Kingdom
UKPGE	United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election

Connecting Parliamentarians

Executive Summary

Considered as the oldest democracy of the world, the United Kingdom went through parliamentary general election on 12 December 2019. Without completing the tenure of maximum five years the elections were called two years after the formation of the parliament following the passing of the Early Parliamentary Election Act 2019. Under the Fixed term Parliaments Act 2011, elections were expected in 2022.

On the invitation of the Electoral Commission UK, a delegation of International Parliamentarians' Congress visited UK from 11 to 13 December. The delegation visited many constituencies of United Kingdom including London (Central and East) and Westminster including Westminster North.

The elections were held in the background of extensive Brexit debates. In a highly polarized environment, different political factions had devised and campaigned for various schools of thought regarding the relationship of UK with the European Union.

According to the results, the Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, won the largest number of seats i.e. 365 and votes i.e. 43.6%. The percentage of vote gathered by Conservatives is significant for the fact it is the highest for any single party since the 43.9% won by Margaret Thatcher for the same party in 1979. Furthermore, their total of 14.0 million votes is the second highest, beaten only by their 14.1 million in 1992.

The Labour Party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, won 202 seats, and 32.1% of the vote. Their share of seats and vote in 2019 is down from 262 seats and 40.0% of the vote in 2017. Continuing its position of previous parliament, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has emerged as the third-largest party in the House of Commons. It has won 48 of the 59 seats in Scotland and secured 45.0% of the Scottish vote. The SNP had won 35 seats and gathered 36.9% of the vote in 2017 election. The voters' turnout of 67.3% has witnessed decline from 68.8% of 2017. The total registered electorate was 47.6 million, higher than the 46.8 million electorate in 2017.

With a clear majority of the Conservatives in 2019 elections, all hopes for remaining a part of the European Union have faded. The United Kingdom will now execute the project of leaving the European Union.

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1. Elections in UK: History and Importance

Commonly termed as the United Kingdom or Great Britain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland consists of three nations i.e. England, Scotland, and Wales. According to some scholars, the United Kingdom is the world's oldest democracy. The allegiance of British citizens rests with the Crown rather than with a written constitution. Crown symbolizes the state, its regime and sovereignty.

In the absence of a written document, the constitution is generally understood to include a number of written and unwritten rules which most British citizens view as inviolable. Most important among them are the Magna Carta 1215, which set a precedent for limits on monarchical power; the Bill of Rights 1689 which established a constitutional monarchy; and the Act of Union 1707 which United Kingdom of England and Scotland. The Constitution of UK also consists of various acts of Parliament, judicial decisions, customs, and traditions. Parliament is considered supreme, so it can amend any aspect of the constitution through a simple majority vote.

Over the centuries, the political history of Britain centered on the gradual decrease of monarchical powers and the strengthening of parliamentary democracy. However, the main political rules of the game have remained almost the same since mid-seventeenth century. The longevity and stability of the democracy in UK has depended largely on traditional legitimacy and a unique political culture of accommodation and moderation.

The gradual shift towards parliamentary democracy has generally been attributed to two major factors. First the rise of political parties, and second the expansion of suffrage. The political parties emerged in the eighteenth century as “cliques of nobles” which expanded as a result of public outreach. Initially, the largest cliques who became parties were the Conservatives (Tories) who supported the monarch, and the Liberals (Whigs) who opposed the policies of the monarch. The suffrage was first expanded in 1832 with the introduction of Reform Act. This Act extended the right to vote to virtually all urban males and some in the countryside which was initially restricted to wealthy elite.

The year 1918 is considered significant in British politics. For the first time, electoral franchise was extended to include women aged over 30, as they became able to vote in general elections. Furthermore, the necessary provision to hold property in order to be able to vote was abolished. Resultantly, a large number of working class people entered into the electorate. The year 1918 also witnessed the emergence of political map dominated by two major parties i.e. the Conservatives and Labour. Since 1918, in total 27 general elections have been conducted in UK. The Conservatives won the most seats on 17 occasions and Labour won the most seats on ten occasions.

I. The Labour Party

With a leftist orientation, the Labour Party was formed in 1900 as an outgrowth of the trade union movement, aimed at becoming the voice of working class in the Parliament of United Kingdom. It emerged as one of the major parties just after the end of World War II in 1945. Like other working-class parties of the world, the Labour Party centered its politics on the ideology of socialism. However, the party pursued its socialist agenda in a moderate manner. So much so that though the party championed a strong welfare state and some state ownership of industry, the party never threatened to replace capitalism in a radical manner. Since 1980s and 1990s, the Labour Party has begun a process of ideological and organizational moderation. Resultantly, the Party presented a cross-class appeal. During 2019 election campaign, the Labour Party said that it would negotiate a new deal with the EU and hold a second referendum on the UK's continued membership.

II. The Conservative Party

The Conservative Party retains moderate rightist orientation. Often termed as Tories, the Conservatives have usually been pragmatic in their approach. Since 1970s, the Tories became divided among advocates of traditional conservative pragmatism of a limited welfare state and of radical or neoliberal free-market reforms. Further divisions have emerged in the Party over the question of European Union. During election 2019, the Conservatives pledged to reintroduce a deal that they had agreed with the EU before the election and ensure the UK left the EU in January 2020. They also hinted at ending the subsequent implementation period agreed with the EU before the end of December 2020.

III. Scottish National Party

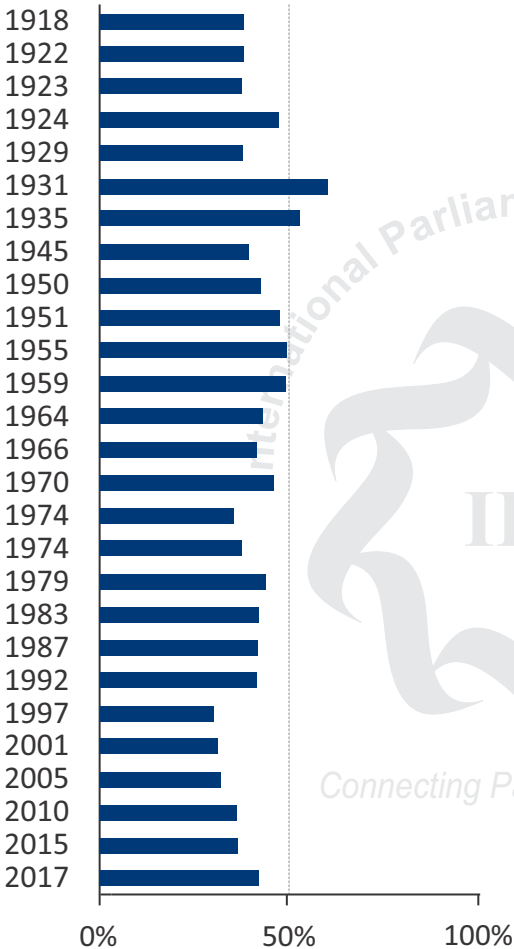
The Scottish National Party (SNP) was formed in 1934 as a union of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party. It has sought to make Scotland an independent state within the European Union (EU). The SNP supports devolution – the legal decentralization of power to the British regions – as initial step towards independence for Scotland. Ideologically, the party is leaned towards moderate **left of centre**. In 2019 election, the party has emerged as the third largest party in the House of Commons.

IV. The Liberal Democrats

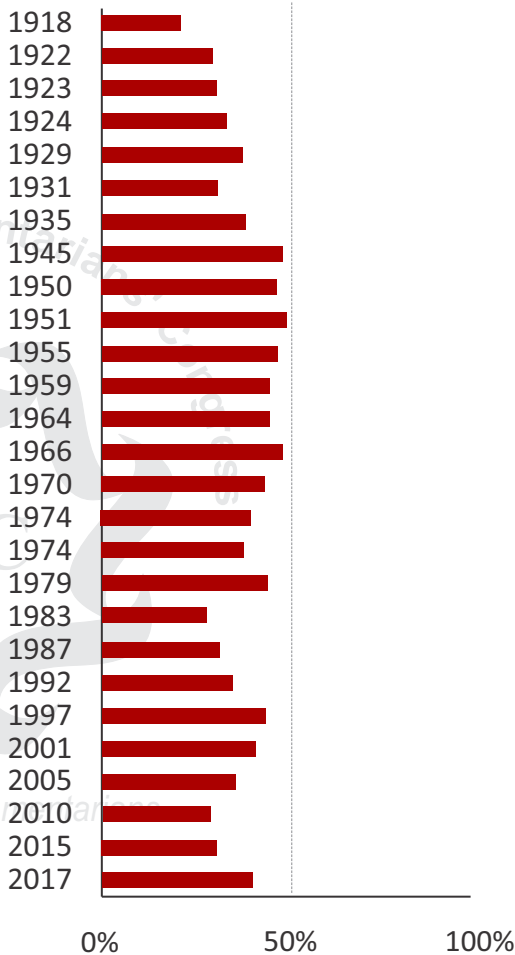
With left-of-center origin, the Liberal Democratic Party was established in 1988 through the merger of the Liberal Party and defectors from the Labour Party. Their ideology is a mixture of classical liberalism's emphasis on both individual freedom and a weak state and social democracy's emphasis on collective equality. The rise of Labour Party in the early twentieth century replaced the Liberal party which initially balanced the conservative party in a bipartisan setting. The Liberal Democrats have been consistent supporters of European integration and staunch opponents of the war in Iraq. The Party has been in coalition with the each of the major

parties from time to time. In 2019 election campaign, the Liberal Democrats said they would seek to revoke Article 50, ending the process of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU.

CONSERVATIVE VOTE SHARE 1918-2017



LABOUR VOTE SHARE 1918-2017



GOVERNMENTS FORMED FOLLOWING GENERAL ELECTIONS			
Date	Party forming government	Prime Minister	Majority ¹
14/12/1918 ²	Coalition	David Lloyd George	283
15/11/1922	Conservative	Andrew Bonar Law	74
06/12/1923 ³	Labour	Ramsay MacDonald	None
29/10/1924	Conservative	Stanley Baldwin	210
30/05/1929	Labour	Ramsay MacDonald	None
27/10/1931 ⁴	National	Ramsay MacDonald	492
14/11/1935 ⁵	National	Stanley Baldwin	242
05/07/1945	Labour	Clement Attlee	147
23/02/1950	Labour	Clement Attlee	6
25/10/1951	Conservative	Sir Winston Churchill	16
26/05/1955	Conservative	Sir Anthony Eden	59
08/10/1959	Conservative	Harold Macmillan	99
15/10/1964	Labour	Harold Wilson	5
31/03/1966	Labour	Harold Wilson	97
18/06/1970	Conservative	Edward Heath	31
28/02/1974	Labour	Harold Wilson	None
10/10/1974	Labour	Harold Wilson	4
03/05/1979	Conservative	Margaret Thatcher	44
09/06/1983	Conservative	Margaret Thatcher	144
11/06/1987	Conservative	Margaret Thatcher	101
09/04/1992	Conservative	John Major	21
01/05/1997	Labour	Tony Blair	178
07/06/2001	Labour	Tony Blair	166
05/05/2005	Labour	Tony Blair	65
06/05/2010 ⁶	Coalition	David Cameron	77
07/05/2015	Conservative	David Cameron	11
08/06/2017	Conservative	Theresa May	None

Notes:

1. Government majority is calculated as the number of seats held by the governing parties minus the number of seats held by all other parties or independent Members. The Speaker is excluded when calculating the majority, but MPs who did not take their seats (for example Sinn Féin Members) are included.
2. The Conservatives and Prime Minister David Lloyd George's wing of the Liberal Party contested the 1918 General Election as a Coalition. More than half of House of Commons seats were won by Conservative candidates, so that the subsequent Coalition government was Conservative dominated. Majority of 283 is calculated including the 73 Sinn Féin Members who did not take their seats.
3. Labour formed a government after the 1923 election but the Conservatives had won the most seats (although not a majority).
4. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald led a 'National Government' into the 1931 election which consisted of the Conservative and Liberal parties along with a few National Labour Members like MacDonald. Conservatives won over three quarters of seats, making the National Government was Conservative dominated.
5. The Conservatives contested the 1935 election again as part of a National Government. The Prime Minister before and after the election, Stanley Baldwin, was a Conservative. The National Government remained Conservative dominated as over half of House of Commons seats were won by Conservative candidates.
6. The Conservatives were the largest party following the 2010 election but did not have a majority. A coalition government was formed with the Liberal Democrats.

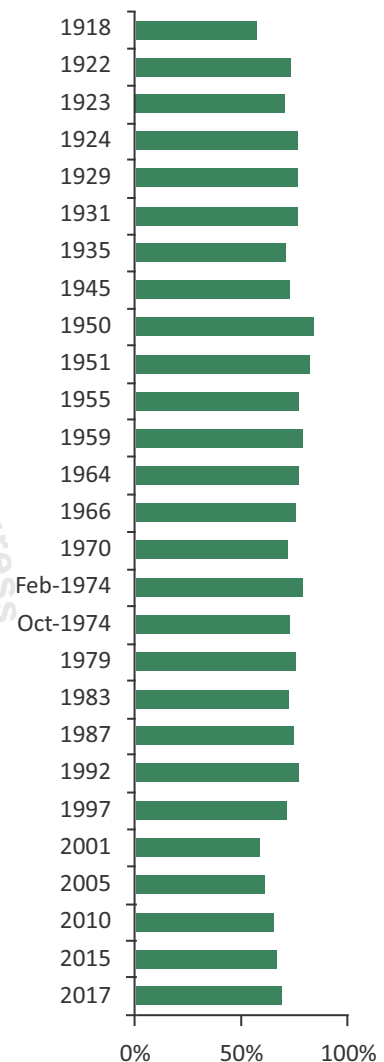
V. Turnout and electorate since 1918

At the start of twentieth century, the voters' turnout was around 57% in 1918. This was mainly because of lesser share of persons belonging to armed service as well as due to a large number of uncontested seats (107 out of a total of 707 seats). It began rising in the second decade as the United Kingdom witnessed above 71 percent voters' turnout from 1922 to 1997. It continued to rise during 1950s, in 1951 a turnout of 80 percent was observed during the general election.

TURNOUT AT UK GENERAL ELECTIONS					
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
1918	55.7	65.9	55.1	69.5	57.2
1922	72.8	79.4	70.4	77.2	73.0
1923	71.1	77.3	67.9	76.5	71.1
1924	77.4%	80.0	75.1	66.7	77.0
1929	76.6	82.4	73.5	63.8	76.3
1931	76.1	79.3	77.4	74.5	76.4
1935	70.7	76.4	72.6	72.0	71.1
1945	73.4	75.7	69.0	67.4	72.8
1950	84.4	84.8	80.9	77.4	83.9
1951	82.7	84.4	81.2	79.9	82.6
1955	76.9	79.6	75.1	74.1	76.8
1959	78.9	82.6	78.1	65.9	78.7
1964	77.0	80.1	77.6	71.7	77.1
1966	75.9	79.0	76.0	66.1	75.8
1970	71.4	77.4	74.1	76.60	72.0
1974 Feb	79.0	80.0	79.0	69.9	78.8
1974 Oct	72.6	76.6	74.8	67.7	72.8
1979	75.9	79.4	76.8	67.7	76.0
1983	72.5	76.1	72.7	72.9	72.7
1987	75.4	78.9	75.1	67.0	75.3
1997	71.4	73.5	71.3	67.1	71.4
2001	59.2	61.6	58.2	68.0	59.4
2005	61.3	62.6	60.8	62.9	61.4
2010	65.5	64.8	63.8	57.6	65.1
2015	66.0	65.7	71.0	58.1	66.2
2017	69.1	68.6	66.4	65.4	68.8

Note: 1918 figures include Ireland.

TURNOUT AT UK GENERAL ELECTIONS



VI. Brexit and election 2019

In 1958, following the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC), the forerunner of EU, the then two major parties of UK i.e. Conservatives and Labour put their efforts to join the organization. However, the credit actually goes to the Conservative Government of Edward Heath for leading the UK into the then EEC by passing the European Communities Act in 1972. Since joining the European community till 2015 the party manifestoes of all political parties, with occasional exceptions (the Labour party committed withdrawal in

1983 manifesto, and the SNP has campaigned for an independent Scotland to be an EU member in its own right since 1980s), expressed commitment to remain part of EU.

On January 23, 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron in a speech at Bloomberg discussed the future of the European Union and declared that he is in favor of an in-out referendum in the future on the basis of a new settlement for the UK in the EU. Subsequently, the Conservative Party pledged for real change in UK's relationship with the European Union in 2015 election manifesto. The Party also committed to hold an in-out referendum of the EU before the end of 2017.

On 17 December 2015, the European Union Referendum Act received the Royal Assent, resultantly, referendum was held on 23 June 2016. According to the results, the majority voted in favor of leaving the EU. In the aftermath of the 2016 referendum supporting withdrawal from EU, both the Conservatives and Labour have supported withdrawal from the EU. On the other hand, both the Liberal Democrats and the SNP have advocated continuing EU membership.

Party Policies on Brexit in General Election 2019

Conservative	<p>When the new Government entered Downing Street, the Prime Minister made a simple promise: to get Brexit done. Many said it would be impossible. But he swiftly negotiated a great new deal—despite Parliament's best efforts to block his progress. And then, when he put it to MPs, they insisted on yet more delay. We must move on. No more renegotiations. No more referendums. Every week is costing us. Investment is waiting to come into the country. Families and businesses cannot make vital decisions. The public services cannot get the attention they deserve. Our priority as Conservatives is to get Brexit done—so that we can unleash the potential of this great country. So that we can push past the obstacles that other parties have put in our country's way. So that we can deliver on the people's decision in 2016 and use our new post-Brexit freedoms to transform the UK for the better by focusing on your priorities.</p> <p>If we elect a majority of Conservative MPs to Parliament, we will start putting our deal through Parliament before Christmas and we will leave the European Union in January.</p> <p>Boris Johnson's new deal takes the whole country out of the EU as one United Kingdom. It takes us out of the customs union, allowing us to set our own tariffs and do our own trade deals. It allows us to pass our own laws and ensures that it is our courts that enforce them.</p> <p>Our deal is the only one on the table. It is signed, sealed and ready. It puts the whole country on a path to a new free trade agreement with the EU. This will be a new relationship based on free trade and friendly cooperation, not on the EU's treaties or EU law. There will be no political alignment with the EU. We will keep the UK out of the single market, out of any form of customs union, and end the role of the European Court of Justice.</p> <p>This future relationship will be one that allows us to:</p>
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1. Take back control of our laws.
2. Take back control of our money.
3. Control our own trade policy.
4. Introduce an Australian-style points-based immigration system.
5. Raise standards in areas like workers' rights, animal welfare, agriculture and the environment.
6. Ensure we are in full control of our fishing waters.

We will negotiate a trade agreement next year—one that will strengthen our Union—and we will not extend the implementation period beyond December 2020. In parallel, we will legislate to ensure high standards of workers' rights, environmental protection and consumer rights.

The only way to deliver Brexit is with a Conservative majority in Parliament. A vote for any other party or candidate is a vote for Jeremy Corbyn—and a vote for more chaos.

Labour

Labour will give the people the final say on Brexit. Within three months of coming to power, a Labour government will secure a sensible deal. And within six months, we will put that deal to a public vote alongside the option to remain. A Labour government will implement whatever the people decide. Only a Labour government will put this decision in the hands of the people to give you the final say. This will be a legally binding referendum and we will implement the people's decision immediately.

The Tories have failed for three years to get Brexit sorted, in a shambles of repeated delays and uncertainty. Whether people voted Leave or Remain in 2016, people and businesses are crying out for politicians in Westminster to finally focus on the wider challenges we face.

Labour rules out a no-deal Brexit, and we will end the scandal of billions of pounds of taxpayers' money being wasted on no-deal preparations. No deal has never been a viable option. It would do enormous harm to jobs, rights, security and to our NHS. Labour has led the campaign to stop a no-deal Brexit. A majority Tory government would pose a renewed threat of the UK crashing out with no deal. Only a Labour government can prevent this.

We will rip up the deeply flawed deal negotiated by Boris Johnson. We opposed his deal precisely because it would do such harm to workers' rights, environmental protections and to our manufacturing industry. Boris Johnson's deal is even worse than Theresa May's: it would leave the UK £70 billion worse off by 2029; it would give the green light to deregulation undermining UK manufacturing; and it would leave our NHS at the mercy of a trade deal with Donald Trump. This sell-out deal is unacceptable to Labour.

Labour will secure a new Brexit deal—one that protects jobs, rights and the environment, avoids a hard border in Northern Ireland and protects the Good Friday Agreement and the peace process. We will also ensure that there is no change in the status or sovereignty of Gibraltar. Our deal will be based on the principles we have set out over the last two years. It will include:

1. A permanent and comprehensive UK-wide customs union, which is vital to

- protect our manufacturing industry and allows the UK to benefit from joint UK-EU trade deals, and is backed by businesses and trade unions.
2. Close alignment with the Single Market—ensuring we have a strong future economic relationship with the EU that can support UK businesses.
 3. Dynamic alignment on workers' rights, consumer rights and environmental protections so that UK standards keep pace across Europe as a minimum, allowing the UK to lead the way, not fall behind.
 4. Continued participation in EU agencies and funding programmes, including in such vital areas of co-operation as the environment, scientific research and culture.
 5. Clear commitments on future security arrangements, including access to the European Arrest Warrant and shared databases, making people safer at home and abroad.

Labour will secure a revised Withdrawal Agreement that provides legal protection for citizens' rights, meets our international obligations—particularly with regard to the Good Friday Agreement—and ensures an appropriate transition period to allow businesses and citizens to adapt to any new arrangements.

We will also secure robust and legally binding protections for workers' rights, consumer standards and environmental protections, and ensure level-playing-field protections are maintained. Labour will never accept an outcome that puts rights and standards at risk.

Once we have secured this new deal we will put it to a legally binding referendum alongside the option of remaining in the EU. This will take place within the first six months of a Labour government. Labour is the only party that can heal the harmful divisions in our communities and address the devastation caused by 10 years of austerity, ruthlessly imposed on society by the Tories and Lib Dems. While other parties have exacerbated polarization, defining everyone by how they voted in the 2016 EU Referendum, Labour has consistently reached across this divide.

Only Labour will deliver a final say referendum. Only Labour will offer the choice of remaining in the EU, or leaving with a sensible deal. This final say referendum will not be a re-run of 2016. It will be legally binding. Labour will implement the decision of the British people immediately.

Labour will introduce legislation to facilitate this referendum and to provide legal certainty and stability following the result. We will introduce a Withdrawal Agreement and Referendum Bill, providing the legal basis to conduct and implement the outcome of the referendum.

We will scrap the Brexit legislation currently proposed by the Tories and introduce new legislation that is in line with Labour's priorities and principles to protect our economy, trade, jobs and rights. This will include new legislation to ensure support and certainty for UK farmers, our fishing industry and protection for our natural environment. Labour recognizes the huge benefits of immigration to our country.

Many British citizens have benefited from freedom of movement, which has given them the opportunity to study, work or retire abroad. Likewise our public services

Liberal Democrat

and our industry have benefited from skilled workers coming here. Labour believes that citizens' rights should never have been used as a bargaining chip in the Brexit negotiations, and recognizes the huge anxiety this has caused for the three million EU nationals living in the UK and the 1.2 million UK nationals who have made their home elsewhere in the EU.

We will end the uncertainty created by the EU Settlement Scheme by granting EU nationals the automatic right to continue living and working in the UK. This new declaratory system will allow EU nationals the chance to register for proof of status if they wish, but will mean they no longer have to apply to continue living and working in this country. This will help ensure reciprocal treatment for UK citizens living in the EU. It will also prevent a repeat of the shameful Windrush scandal and avoid unnecessarily criminalizing hundreds of thousands of EU nationals.

If in a referendum the British people decide to remain in the EU, this must not mean accepting the status quo. Labour will work with partners across Europe to make the case for radical reform of the EU—in particular to ensure that its collective strength is focused on tackling the climate emergency, tax evasion and ending austerity and inequality.

The EU needs a new political direction and, if the people decide the UK should remain in the EU, Labour will lead the way to ensure that change.

For too long a politically inflicted wave of austerity has damaged communities across Britain and across Europe. The most vulnerable members in our society have suffered, while the super-rich continue to be rewarded by a system that allows them to thrive at the expense of the many. This must change. If the country decides to remain, a Labour government will take a different approach and strive to ensure that the EU works for people across our communities. The EU should focus on policies that value investment, protect public services and make those who have the most pay their fair share.

If people decide to leave, a Labour government will work constructively with the EU on vital issues of mutual interest and to the mutual benefit of the UK and EU. But we will leave the EU. Most importantly, under a Labour government, you will get the final say on Brexit.

Every vote for the Liberal Democrats is a vote to stop Brexit and stay in the European Union. For over three years Liberal Democrats have led the fight to stop Brexit. We campaigned to stay in the EU in 2016 and we unequivocally believe that the UK is stronger as part of the EU.

The election of a Liberal Democrat majority government on a clear stop Brexit platform will provide a democratic mandate to stop this mess, revoke Article 50 and stay in the EU. In other circumstances, we will continue to fight for a people's vote with the option to stay in the EU, and in that vote we would passionately campaign to keep the UK in the EU.

Electing a Liberal Democrat government is the only way to get the Brexit process over. Although the Conservatives claim that a vote for them will 'get Brexit done', it won't: it will simply usher in more years of difficult negotiations over the UK's trade deal with the EU, with a very high chance of Britain crashing out and trying to

survive on so-called ‘WTO terms’—a deal so bad that almost no other country anywhere in the world trades on that basis.

Labour want to reopen the Withdrawal Agreement all over again and negotiate a new deal—but they will not say whether they want Britain to remain in the EU or leave. The fact is that whether Labour Red or Tory Blue, Brexit is bad for the UK.

The importance of the UK’s membership of the EU has never been clearer. Working together through the EU, the countries of Europe have achieved peace and prosperity on a continent historically wracked by war and division. That is a tremendous achievement; it should not be taken for granted, particularly as Europe faces new dangers from an increasingly aggressive Russia and as the US turns away from its old alliances.

Many of the great challenges of the 21st century are global: climate change, human trafficking, the arms trade, the power of multinationals, global poverty and inequality. By separating itself from the EU, Britain diminishes its capacity to respond to these threats. By working together with our European neighbours, we increase the UK’s ability to meet those challenges: for example, in international negotiations, in regulating the tech giants or in creating markets for climate-friendly products.

There is no doubt that full membership of the EU is good for the British economy. Brexit would bring to an end businesses’ unfettered access to the European single market—the destination of almost half of Britain’s exports—and to the smooth flow of goods that complex industrial supply chains require. The prospect of tariffs and border checks is already causing manufacturers to shift their operations to other EU states and UK manufacturers are already reporting that export orders have dried up.

There is no prospect of replacing lost EU markets with free trade agreements with other countries thousands of miles away. If the UK gives in to President Trump’s demands to lower environmental and health standards for a trade deal with the US, we would lose the ability to export to the EU, which would drive many British businesses, including most farmers, out of business. Brexit is bad for jobs, growth and prosperity.

Brexit will also mean an end to freedom of movement, which has brought the UK tremendous social, economic and cultural benefits. It gives British people the opportunity to work, be together with their loved ones, study and retire anywhere in the EU. There is no contradiction between our European and our British, national and regional identities: they enrich one another. By stopping Brexit, Liberal Democrats will protect and maintain freedom of movement, safeguarding the rights of UK citizens living elsewhere in the EU and EU citizens in the UK. Liberal Democrats will also support the right of the people of Gibraltar to remain in the European Union.

EU citizens are valued members of our communities and we believe that they should be afforded the right to full participation in civic life, including the ability to stand for office and vote in UK referendums, European elections and general elections as well as local elections. Liberal Democrats will extend these rights to all

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Party**

EU citizens who have lived in the UK for five years or longer.

To ensure that EU citizens are not denied their vote in any election or referendum, we will also implement urgent electoral law reform, in line with the Electoral Commission's 2014 recommendations, including introducing a legal requirement for councils to inform citizens of the steps they must take to be successfully registered and making the necessary changes to ensure that the UK has an automatic system of inclusion in elections.

The national humiliation of Brexit puts so much at risk—the NHS, public services, jobs across the country, scientific collaboration, peace in Northern Ireland, the unity of the UK, our ability to tackle global crises such as climate change and our global reputation as a country that is confident and outward-facing. By keeping the UK in the EU, we can get on with tackling the real issues facing our country, using the Remain Bonus of £50 billion to invest in public services and tackle inequality.

A Liberal Democrat government will stop Brexit—and build a brighter future for the UK by keeping us at the heart of the European Union.

Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU but has been completely ignored by Westminster and our interests have been trampled over throughout the entire process. This is unacceptable. There is no way that Brexit will be done in the next few months. Instead it will go on for years as the UK has to try to negotiate trade agreements with the EU and countries around the world.

We will work with others across Scotland and the UK to escape from Brexit. In a UK context, we will support a second EU referendum with Remain on the ballot paper. And if it is the only alternative to a 'no deal' Brexit, we will support the revocation of Article 50.

Whatever Scotland's constitutional status it is important for the UK to remain as close to the EU as possible. SNP MPs will always vote to protect Scotland's place in the single market and customs union. [...]

Brexit has destroyed the idea of the United Kingdom as a partnership of equals. Wales and England both voted to leave and under the Boris Johnson deal will leave. Northern Ireland is to get a special deal and the right to choose its future. Scotland—the nation of the UK with the highest remain vote—is to get nothing.

The Tory Brexit deal will take Scotland out of the EU, out of the Single Market and Customs Union, all against our will. That is unfair and anti-democratic. Brexit will put barriers between our businesses and the world's largest single market. It will make Scotland poorer, cost jobs, hit living standards and threaten environmental standards and workers' rights.

The trade deal the Tories plan with Donald Trump also risks opening the NHS up to US multinational companies. It risks opening our markets to chlorinated chicken and hormone injected beef. The Boris Johnson deal does not get Brexit done. It will just herald the start of lengthy and complex trade talks. It opens the door to many more years of Brexit dominating Westminster politics. And if trade talks fail next year, or don't reach a conclusion in time, a no deal Brexit will be back on the table. Scotland has the right to choose a better future. [...]

The people of Scotland voted decisively to remain in the EU and their wishes

should be respected. And whatever the different views of Brexit might be, there is no doubt that the whole process has descended into chaos and confusion. The SNP will therefore continue working with others across Scotland and the UK to stop Brexit. We will support a referendum with remain on the ballot paper to allow Brexit to be stopped for the whole of the UK. And if we face a situation where the only alternative is a no deal Brexit, we will support the revocation of Article 50.

The SNP believes the best future for Scotland is to become an independent member of the EU. Whatever Scotland's constitutional status it is in our interests for the UK to remain as close to the EU as possible. The Brexit deal negotiated by Boris Johnson will not "get Brexit done". Instead it opens the door to many more years of negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU. Talks on a future trade deal have not even started and there is a high chance they could break down next year meaning "no deal" will be back on the table.

The deal that Boris Johnson wants will take Scotland out of the EU, out of the Single Market and out of the Customs Union. It threatens environmental standards and workers' rights, and it will leave the NHS vulnerable to a trade deal with Donald Trump.

It will make Scotland poorer—a GDP loss equivalent to £1,600 per person by the end of the next decade—compared with continuing EU membership. And by ending freedom of movement it will increase the risk of Scotland's working population falling, damaging our economy, prosperity and public services. It is time therefore for Scotland to look to the future, rather than being embroiled in never-ending Brexit debates that drag us back to the past.

12 of the other 27 EU member states have populations similar to or smaller than Scotland. For countries of our size the attractions of being part of the world's biggest trading block and single market are obvious. The more Ireland, for example, has broadened its export base as a result of EU membership, the wealthier it has become.

We are strongly committed to upholding the core values of the EU. Scotland's abundant energy resources, leadership on tackling climate change, world-class universities and many other attributes mean we not only have much to contribute to EU membership, but also a lot to gain.

2. Electoral process in UK

Like the United States, UK uses the single-member district (SMD) system based on plurality or commonly termed first past the post (FPTP) system of election. The entire population is represented in the House of Commons through 650 MPs elected in each of the constituencies through plurality of votes. The constituencies are based mostly on population, and on average a constituency consists of 68,000 voters. A government commission revises the constituencies every five to seven years.

Local authority elections in England and Wales are also conducted by the FPTP system. A voter may have either one, two or three votes at a local government election (more in the case of Parish election). A number of other electoral systems are in use in the United Kingdom for other types of elections such as those for the European Parliament, Greater London Assembly, Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.

I. Legal framework

UK does not have a consolidated electoral law regarding electoral arrangements. However, key statutes are:

a) Representation of People Act of 1983

The Representation of the People Act usually refers to the various statutes enacted by the Parliament of the United Kingdom from the 19th century onwards dealing with the electoral system. The Act was enacted for the first time in 1832. In the following years, these Acts kept coming one after another with various amendments, as per requirement of that time period. This Act changed the British electoral process in the following ways: (i) Amended the Representation of the People Act 1969; (ii) Stated that a convicted person cannot vote at any parliamentary or local election whilst in prison; (iii) Laid down the appeals process in local elections.

The Act also regulates how political parties and people acting on their behalf are to behave before and during an election by putting a check on election expenses, publicity, election meetings, and corrupt withdrawal from candidature by candidates and political parties.

b) Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act of 2000 (PPERA)

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act, 2000 is an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom that sets out how political parties, elections and referendums are to be regulated in the United Kingdom. It formed an important part of the constitutional reform programme implemented by the 1997 Labour Government, building on the Registration of Political Parties Act 1998, which was passed two years earlier. This Act established an Electoral Commission to make provision about; (i) the registration and finances of political parties, (ii) the donations and expenditure for political purposes, (iii) the election and referendum campaigns and the conduct

of referendums, and (iv) the election petitions and other legal proceedings in connection with elections.

c) Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011

The Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 September 2011 and came into force on that day. The Act has a major impact on the timing of parliamentary elections in the UK. It is the legislation that introduced fixed-term elections to Westminster for the first time, creating a five-year period between general elections. It removed the prerogative power of the Queen, on the advice of the Prime Minister, to dissolve Parliament and trigger a general election. The Act specifies that early elections can be held only: (i) If a motion for an early general election is agreed either by at least two-thirds of the whole House or without division; or (ii) If a motion of no confidence is passed and no alternative government is confirmed by the Commons within 14 days.

d) The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, which amended electoral law in the United Kingdom. It introduced Individual Electoral Registration (IER). The Act amends the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Representation of the People Act 2000. Therefore this Act provides for Administration and Conduct of Elections as well in Great Britain.

e) Early Parliamentary General Election Bill 2019

The Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019 is an Act that made legal provision for the holding of the 2019 United Kingdom General Election on Thursday 12 December 2019.

The Act was fast-tracked in its passage through Parliament, meaning that it completed all of its stages in the House of Commons in a single day, on 29 October 2019, and received its formal First Reading in the House of Lords on the same day. It completed its remaining stages there on 30 October, and received royal assent, thereby becoming law, on 31 October.

The Act is an unusual piece of constitutional legislation, as it circumvented the operation of ordinary electoral law. The ordinary law on parliamentary general elections is the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, under which elections take place every five years, except that an early general election can be triggered by the House of Commons in either of two ways: (i) a resolution supported by at least two thirds of the total membership of the House; or (ii) by a vote of no confidence in the government. The 2019 Act, being a new Act, only required a simple majority of the members voting in order to pass. The Act automatically became spent upon the conclusion of the election.

The Early Parliamentary General Election Act, 2019 contains only two sections: (i) An early parliamentary general election to take place on 12 December 2019 in consequence of the passing

of this Act. (ii) That day is to be treated as a polling day appointed under section 2(7) of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011.

Time line of UK Parliamentary General election 2019	
<i>October 31, 2019</i>	Early Parliament General Election Bill¹ Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the bill it received Royal Assent on 31 October.
<i>November 6, 2019</i>	Dissolution of parliament Dissolution is the official term for the end of a Parliament. It took place on November 06, 2019. Writs issued for elections to take place in the UK's 650 constituencies. Following dissolution, the date for the return of Parliament was announced as December 17, 2019
<i>November 7, 2019</i>	Receipt of Writ
<i>Not later than November 11, 2019 (4 pm)</i>	Publication of notice of election
<i>Between 10am and 4pm on any working day after the publication of the notice of election until 14 November (4pm)</i>	Delivery of nomination papers
<i>November 14, 2019</i>	Deadline for withdrawal of nomination Candidates intending to stand as MPs needed to hand in nomination papers by 4pm. Candidates who wanted to withdraw their nominations had to do so by 4pm.
<i>November 21, 2019 (5pm)</i>	Deadline for receiving new postal vote and postal proxy applications, and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes in Northern Ireland
<i>November 26, 2019</i>	Voter registration deadline
<i>November 26, 2019</i>	Deadline for postal vote applications There are many ways to vote. ² The deadline for a new postal or proxy vote and any changes to existing postal votes had to be in by 5pm.
<i>December 4, 2019</i>	Deadline for proxy vote Deadline for applying for a new proxy vote (except for emergency proxies) was 5pm.
<i>December 6, 2019</i>	First date that electors can apply for a replacement for lost postal votes
<i>December 12, 2019</i>	Polling day Polling booths were open between 7am and 10pm.

¹ Baroness Evans of Bowes Park (Conservative), Leader of the House of Lords, opened the debate on the bill and responded on behalf of Government.

² See Glossary for further details.

	Counting of votes began when the polls closed.
<i>December 12, 2019 (5pm)</i>	Last time that electors can apply for re-issue of spoilt or lost postal votes
<i>December 12, 2019 (5pm)</i>	Deadline for emergency proxy applications
<i>December 17, 2019</i>	Parliament returned for the election of the Speaker The Speaker is elected (or re-elected) on the first day that the House meets after the General Election. MPs and members of the House of Lords swear the oath of allegiance or make an solemn affirmation.
<i>December 19, 2019</i>	State Opening of Parliament The State Opening marks the formal start of the parliamentary year. The Queen's Speech sets out the government's proposed policies and legislation for the coming session.
<i>January 17, 2020 (assuming result is declared on 13th December)</i>	Delivery of return as to election expenses
<i>March 11, 2020</i>	Deadline for sending postal vote identifier rejection notices

II. The Electoral Commission UK

The Electoral Commission was set up in 2000 under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). The Commission is an independent body vested with the responsibility to oversee elections and regulate political finance in the UK. The Commission reports to the UK and Scottish Parliaments.

It is noteworthy that the Electoral Commission does not run the polling stations, count the votes or announce the results at elections. The Returning Officer at the local council performs these tasks in England, Scotland or Wales. In the Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer at the Electoral Office of Northern Ireland runs the elections.

The Electoral Commission also runs public awareness campaigns in the run-up to elections and referendums. The primary purpose of these campaigns is to encourage as many eligible voters as possible to register to vote by the deadline, and to make sure they have the information they need to cast their vote. These campaigns consist of four parts: 1) paid advertising, 2) supporting partners, 3) owned channels, 4) press coverage.

At the time of election, the Commission is responsible for:

- a) Giving guidance and support to Returning Officers;
- b) Giving guidance to political parties and people standing in the election;
- c) Running campaigns so people know when the deadlines are for registering to vote, and applying for postal and proxy votes;

- d) Publishing information about the donations political parties, campaigners and other groups receive, and how much money they are spending;
- e) Looking at how well the Returning Officers are doing, and whether they are working to our performance standards;
- f) Making sure people have all the information they need to vote, including how to find their polling station;
- g) Answering the questions people ask us on polling day.

Key responsibilities and designated authorities	
Running of the election	<p><u>Returning Officer (RO)</u></p> <p>ROs have the right to receive the writ and announce the results of the count; they are generally elected or appointed persons such as High Sheriff, the Lord Mayor/Mayor or the Chairman of the local council. The RO can also choose to declare the result at the end of the count and return the writ.</p>
Administration of the election, including the conduct of the count	<p><u>Acting Returning Officer (A)RO</u></p> <p>(A)RO is appointed by the local authority and is usually the Chief Executive or a senior council officer. The (A)RO has responsibility for the organization of the election – including nominations, distribution of poll cards and postal ballot papers, the conduct of the poll and the counting of votes.</p> <p>In Scotland, the Returning Officer for a UK Parliamentary election is the same person as the Returning Officer for local government elections. they are therefore responsible for all aspects of the administration of the 12 December 2019 election.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for administering the poll.</p>
Preparation and maintenance of electoral registers	<p><u>Electoral Registration Officers (ERO)</u></p> <p>They are responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the electoral registers and list of absent voters within their area. They must ensure that the electoral registers are as complete and accurate as possible.</p> <p>In England and Wales the ERO is also the (A)RO. In Scotland, the ERO is not automatically the RO – they are a person appointed by the local authority or by a combination of local authorities.</p>
Day to day management of electoral function	<p><u>Electoral Services Manager</u></p> <p>In many ways the key official is the Electoral Services Manager of the local authority in question, who is responsible for the day to day management of the electoral function.</p>
Running the polling stations	<p><u>Presiding Officers</u></p>

	(Acting) Returning Officers appoint Presiding Officers to run polling stations. Duties include organizing the layout of the polling station, supervising poll clerks, issuing ballot papers, assisting voters, accounting for all ballot papers and ensuring that ballot boxes are transported securely to the count venue.
Management of candidate's election campaign	<u>Agent</u> In each constituency each candidate has an election agent. This is the person responsible in law for the proper management of the candidate's election campaign.
--	<u>Tellers</u> At each polling station the candidate may have 'tellers'. These are party supporters who stand outside polling stations and record the electoral numbers of those who have voted. This enables their parties to identify likely supporters who have not voted and urge them to vote before the close of poll. The tellers have no official legal status and are not permitted to operate inside polling stations.

III. Voter Eligibility and Registration

Eligibility

- a) Aged 18 or over on polling day.
- b) A British citizen, Irish citizen or qualifying Commonwealth citizen resident in the UK. A qualifying Commonwealth citizen is one that has leave to remain in the UK or does not require such leave.
- c) British citizens living abroad if they or their parents/guardian (if they left when they were under 18) have been registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years.
- d) European Union citizens resident in the UK cannot vote in a UK parliamentary General Election, but can also be included on the electoral register and vote in local, Greater London Assembly, Police and Crime Commissioner, Northern Ireland Assembly, Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and European Parliamentary elections.

Registration

- e) Applications can be made on line or by completing an individual Registration form. Some Electoral Registration Officers also offer the possibility of making registration applications in person and/or by telephone. To make the registration system more secure, applicants must provide their date of birth and National Insurance number as part of their application.
- f) In certain circumstances, it is possible for someone to be lawfully registered to vote in more than one place. In order to do so, the applicant must be resident at each address, as defined in electoral law. There are several groups of people who may be entitled to be

registered to vote in more than one place. However, they can only vote once in a Parliamentary election.

- g) British citizens living abroad can register to vote as an 'Overseas Voter' if they or their parents/guardian (if they left when they were under 18) have been registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years.
- h) Service personnel and their families that are based in the UK and unlikely to change address or be posted overseas this year can register to vote online as ordinary electors. Service personnel and their families can also register as 'Service Voters'. This allows them to be registered for five years in respect of a fixed address in England, Scotland or Wales even if they move around. Service personnel can register online as a 'Service Voter' at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces>. Service personnel and their families can also apply to vote by post or by proxy. In reaching their decision, those who are living overseas should consider whether there's enough time for a postal vote to be sent to them and for them to return it to (Acting) Returning Officer before the close of poll.
- i) People with disability can receive assistance from someone else to complete an application – whether that be a paper form or online – but the person who wants to register to vote has to make the declaration of truth. In England and Wales, a person with the relevant power of attorney can also make this declaration.

IV. Candidate Eligibility

In order to contest the general election in UK, a person must be: at least 18 years of age on the day they are nominated and on polling; a British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen; a qualifying Commonwealth citizen is one that has indefinite leave to remain in the UK or does not require leave to remain. A candidate at the general election is not required to be registered as an elector or live in the Parliamentary constituency in which they wish to stand.

Some of the rules barring a candidate from standing to become a Member of Parliament include if: they are civil servants, members of police force, members of the armed forces, judges, returning officers or peers who sit in the House of Lords, they are a subject of bankruptcy restrictions order made by a court in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (though bankruptcy in itself does not bar them from standing); or, their state has been sequestered by a court in Scotland and they have not been discharged; they have been convicted of an imprisonable offence and are detained in prison for more than a year; they have been found or reported guilty of a corrupt or an illegal electoral practice within the past five or three years respectively.

Candidates can choose to stand for election as a Member of Parliament either as a 'party candidate' or as an 'independent candidate'. The earliest date that someone could officially become a candidate at the UK Parliamentary election was when Parliament was dissolved, Wednesday 6 November 2019. However, prospective candidates could be selected by their party, or announce their intention to stand before this. A candidate must have submitted their

nomination papers to the (Acting) Returning Officer by 4pm, Thursday 1 November in order to stand.

Requirements for party candidates:

Prospective party candidates must submit to their (Acting) Returning Officer:

- a) Completed nomination form containing the signature of 10 registered electors from the constituency supporting the nomination
- b) Completed home address form
- c) Completed consent to nomination
- d) A deposit of £500
- e) A certificate from the political party authorizing the use of the party name or a party description as registered by the Electoral Commission
- f) A written request to use one of the party's registered emblems (optional)

Requirements for independent candidates:

Prospective independent candidates must submit the following to their (Acting) Returning Officer:

- g) A completed nomination form containing the signatures of 10 registered electors from the constituency supporting the nomination
- h) A completed home address form
- i) A completed consent to nomination
- j) A deposit of £500

Independent candidates may only use the word 'independent' (and/or 'Annibynnol' in Wales) as their description on the ballot paper; or they can choose not to have a description.

V. Campaigning at the election

a) Making statements about the candidates

As at all elections, it is illegal to make a false statement about the personal character of a candidate in order to affect their election. Rules about defamation also apply to election materials. The police may investigate allegations of the specific electoral offence of making a false statement. Defamation issues are a matter for the civil courts. As with all elections, the Electoral Commission does not have any regulatory role in relation to the content of campaign material or what candidates say about each other.

b) Electoral rules regarding campaign materials

By law, candidates must use “imprints” on all their printed campaign material. All printed material (i.e. posters, placards and leaflets) must include the name and address of the printer and promoter (the person who authorized the material to be printed). This is so that electors can be clear about the source of the campaign material. It is an offence not to include an imprint on election material. The Electoral Commission also recommends that candidates, wherever possible, place an imprint on their electronic materials (i.e. websites, emails, and social media platforms), but this is not a legal requirement.

c) Candidates’ access to electoral register

Candidates (once they officially become one) are entitled to receive, free of charge, a copy of the full electoral register and the lists of people voting by post or proxy (the absent voters’ lists) for the constituency that they are contesting. Candidates can only use the full electoral register to help them campaign and to check that donations they receive come from a permissible source.

d) Delivery of leaflets

Candidates are entitled to one free postage to electors in the constituency. This can include: one unaddressed election communication of up to 60 grams to every postal address; or one election communication of up to 60 grams addressed to each elector; candidates contact Royal Mail directly to make the arrangements for their leaflets.

VI. Campaign spending

The spending limits for each candidate are calculated by adding together a base amount and a variable top up that takes into account the number of registered electors in the constituency that is being contested.

What are the spending limits? Regulated period³ dates	Fixed amounts	Variable amounts
Wednesday 6 November May until polling day, Thursday 12 December	£8,700	6p per registered parliamentary elector in a borough constituency (burg constituency in Scotland) or 9p per registered parliamentary elector in a county constituency

a. Information with regard to number of electors

³ The regulated period for the UKPGE begins the day after the date you officially become a candidate, and ends on polling day, 12 December 2019. The earliest date you can officially become a candidate is the day after the UK Parliament is dissolved.

If an individual’s intention to stand as a candidate is not announced before 6 November, the campaign will begin on either the day that they do announce their intention, or the date that they are nominated as a candidate, whichever is the earlier.

Candidates can contact their local elections office to request the most up-to-date number of electors to help them plan their spending during the campaign.

b. Activities towards the spending limits

Candidate spending includes any expenses incurred, whether on goods, services, property or facilities, for the purposes of the candidate's election during the regulated period. These activities include: advertising of any kind – for example, posters, newspaper adverts, websites or YouTube videos; unsolicited materials sent to voters – for example, letters or leaflets; transport costs; public meetings; staff costs – for example, an agent's salary; accommodation – for example, the campaign office; administrative costs – for example, telephone bills, stationary and photocopying.

c. Activities that do not count towards the spending limit

Activities that do not count include: payment of a candidate's deposit; anything (except adverts) appearing in a newspaper or on a licensed broadcast channel; facilities like public room for meeting; volunteer time including time spent by the unpaid staff; use of someone's main residence; use of someone's personal car or other means of transport; general computer equipment bought for personal use.

d. Limit on donations

There is no limit on donations candidates can accept in the general election. However, candidates can only accept donations of money, items or services worth more than £50 towards their campaign spending from a permissible source. All donations worth more than £50 must be published in the candidate's spending return. They do not need to declare donations with a value of £50 or less.

e. Permissible donors

Anyone can make donation worth less than £50 to candidates. Candidates must ensure they only accept donations of more than £50 from a permissible source. Donations that are not from a permissible source must be returned to the donor within 30 days. After that, the donation may be forfeited. Permissible donors in the UK are defined as: an individual on a UK electoral register; a GB registered political party; a UK registered company which is incorporated within the EU and carries on business in the UK; a UK registered trade union; a UK registered building society; a UK registered limited liability partnership; a UK registered friendly society; a UK based unincorporated association.

f. Candidates' reporting on regulated spending

Candidates standing to be a Member of Parliament (or their agents) must submit their campaign spending returns to their (Acting) Returning Officer within 35 days of the election result being

declared. The return should include details of donations and spending during the 'short' campaign. If no spending is incurred, a nil return must be submitted by the candidate or their agent.

g. Campaign spending of a political party

For political parties that are contesting the UK parliamentary general election, the amount a party can spend is whichever the greater is of:

Either: Part of GB	Spending limit
England	£ 810,000
Scotland	£ 120,000
Wales	£ 60,000

OR

£30,000 x the number of seats a party is contesting in each part of Great Britain. Each part of Great Britain has a separate limit based on the number of seats a party is contesting in each area. Part of GB	Number of seats
England	533
Scotland	59
Wales	40
Total:	632

If a party is contesting each of the 650 Parliamentary constituencies across the United Kingdom then it would be: £30,000x650=£19.5 million.

h. Regulated period

The combined regulated period for political parties who are contesting at the UK Parliamentary General Election and contested seats at the European Parliamentary elections began on Thursday 13 December 2019 and ends on the day of the poll, Thursday 12 December 2019.

i. Political Parties' activities towards the spending limit

Party spending is defined as items, facilities and services that are used to promote the party itself, or to criticize other parties, during the regulated period. These include: party advertising of any kind – e.g. street banners, websites and videos; unsolicited material sent to voters – for example, letters or leaflets; the manifesto and other documents setting out the party's policies; market research to find out how people intend to vote; party press conferences; party rallies and

events, including the cost of people's attendance and any goods, services or facilities provided; transport in connection with publicizing the campaign.

j. Political parties' activities that do not count towards the spending limit

Activities that do not count towards the spending limit include: permanent, fixed term or temporary staff costs where the staff member has a direct employment contract with the party; volunteer time; office running costs, except costs that are higher than usual because of campaigning, such as telephone bills; people's travel, food and accommodation costs while they campaign, unless you reimburse them; expenses met out of public funds. For example, security costs for VIP visits; material sent only to members; party conferences; local newsletters about elected representatives or prospective candidates; anything which a candidate declares on their spending return.



3. Election Observation

METHODOLOGY

A two Member Election Observation Team of the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) comprising the Honourable Senator Kauda Babar and Mr Hyder Ali Sundrani, ASGP, IPC, observed the election process from 11th-13th December, 2019 in UK. The observation methodology was based on following inputs:

- i. Visits of three polling stations at St Cyprians Church, Rudolf Steiner House and St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School in London, UK, whereby the two Observers filled in a predetermined Election Form/checklist (see Annex III for said performa/form)
- ii. A qualitative open-end Election Assessment (see Annex II) filled by both the Observers in which general assessment regarding election environment and organization, campaigns as well as role of Electoral Commission, media and the interest of people were recorded.
- iii. The Observers also availed the opportunity to interview different citizens, media men and the electoral staff at the polling stations.

The key inferences drawn by the IPC observers through above instruments are recorded as follows:

I. Polling station setup and environment

Overall the polling station setup and environment met basic requirements. The polling booths were opened at the stipulated time. There were no issues with regard to the security of ballot boxes. They were clearly visible and sealed as per the code of practice issued by the concerned authorities. There were no issues with regard to the availability of necessary material like ink, stamp, symbol list, ballots, and electoral rolls etc.

II. Personnel in the polling booth

The presence of requisite polling staff was ensured. Though the law provides for certain persons to be present in the polling station apart from the election staff and voters, including: candidates, election agents, police officers, representatives of the Electoral Commission, accredited observers, persons under the age of 18 who accompany the voters, and companions of disabled voters, the polling stations visited by the observers did not witness presence of most of them else than the observers. The observers were provided adequate access to record the proceedings in adequate manner, and no undue interference in this regard was noticed.

III. Voting process

The voters were properly registered in formal electoral roll. The polling staff was not checking the identity of voters before issuing his/her a ballot. However, the voters were properly inked

and ticked off the voter list. Ballots were properly stamped and signed on the back before given to the voter. No incidence of turning away a voter for lack of proper identification or being missing from the electoral roll was witnessed inside the polling station. Furthermore, electoral process was transparent as only eligible voters casted their right and there wasn't any bogus voting.

The conduct of the polling staff was fair and they duly performed their duties. Voters were provided adequate assistance wherever required. The polling station did not run out of material at any point in time. Consequently, the voting process did not disrupt or suspend at any time during the day in the three polling stations. Also there was no incidence of violence, harassment or intimidation. Overall, no major problem with the voting process was observed.

IV. Closing and counting

Like the rest of the polling days, the closing and counting also were smooth. As the administration had established the polling stations keeping in view the number of voters, no hassle or undue rush was witnessed on the polling station at the time of closing. The officials did follow the procedures for counting as per the given code of practice. The decision making regarding invalid ballot was fair and impartial. The ballots were reconciled properly at the end of the count. The observers and agents were allowed to witness the counting process. They were also provided with the copy of the results form. However, the final result count was not posted outside of the polling station.

V. Media Reports

No major allegations with regard to election rigging have been reported. According to media reports, however, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition party has identified the tactical voting among some of the factors for the crushing defeat of the Labour party. Some of the other factors include a muddled Brexit message, and failure to tackle anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, members of the Labour Party consider lack of popularity of the leader himself is the single most important factor for the defeat Labour party has witnessed in this election.

There were some reports with regard to impartiality in media coverage. The Guardian reported that Conservative supporters complained about the BBC's news coverage during general election more than even the supporters of Labour party. A letter of complaint is also expected to emerge from Tories' side.

VI. International observation

The Electoral Commission (EC) of the UK is the prime agency for making arrangements for international observation. Its role is to authorize people and organizations to observe UK elections and relevant referendums. An individual (above the age of 16) or an organization can apply to become an electoral observer in UK. Those accredited by the EC can observe the: issue or receipt of postal papers, taking of the poll, and counting of the votes. More than one thousand

individuals and organizations from within the United Kingdom and across the world participated in the elections as accredited observers. Detailed lists of observers can be accessed on the official website of the Electoral Commission i.e. <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/observing-elections-and-referendums/registers-accredited-electoral-observers>.

The Electoral Commission UK invited the delegation of IPC for briefing and observing 2019 UK Parliamentary General Elections. The briefing event was primarily aimed to provide an overview of all aspects of the election including how the poll is delivered, who can vote, the count process and the financial rules for political parties and other campaigners. It was a unique opportunity to hear directly from the chair of the Electoral Commission, Sir John Holmes, in the days leading up to the polls. Honorable Senator Kauda Babar, member of the IPC Committee on Monitoring and Observation of Elections in the world and Mr. Hyder Ali Sundrani, Assistant Secretary General IPC, participated as International Accredited Observers for the UK Parliamentary General Election 2019.

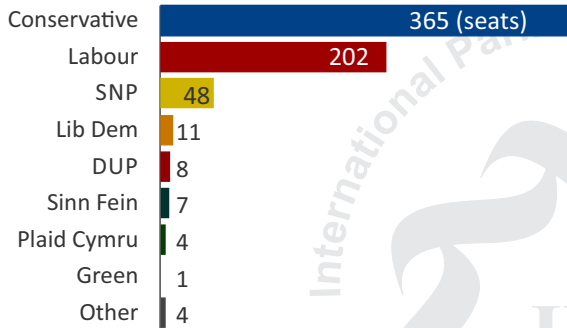
Region	Constituencies
England	533
Scotland	59
Wales	40
Northern Ireland	18
Total	650

VI. Results: United Kingdom Parliamentary Election 2019

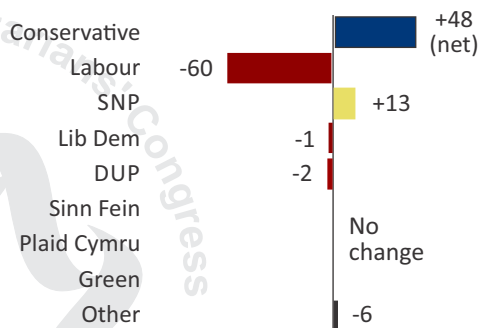
Voting was held in 650 constituencies across the UK. According to the results, the Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, won the largest number of seats i.e. 365 and votes i.e. 43.6%. The percentage of vote gathered by Conservatives is significant for the fact it is the highest for any single party since the 43.9% won by Margaret Thatcher for the same party in 1979. Furthermore, their total of 14.0 million votes is the second highest, beaten only by their 14.1 million in 1992. The Labour Party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, won 202 seats, and 32.1% of the vote. Their share of seats and vote in 2019 is down from 262 seats and 40.0% of the vote in 2017. Continuing its position of previous parliament, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has emerged as the third-largest party in the House of Commons. It has won 48 of the 59 seats in Scotland and secured 45.0% of the Scottish vote. The SNP had won 35 seats and gathered 36.9% of the vote in 2017 election. The voters' turnout of 67.3% has witnessed decline from 68.8% of 2017. The total registered electorate was 47.6 million, higher than the 46.8 million electorate in 2017.

General Election 2019: Summary

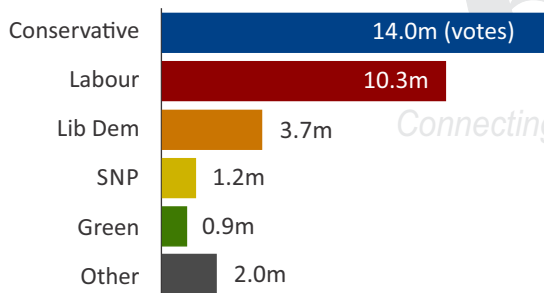
The Conservative Party won an overall majority



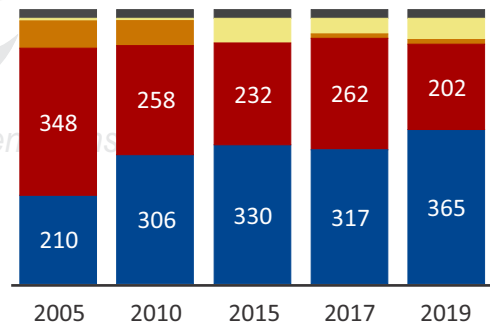
81 seats changed hands. The Conservatives gained 48 seats and Labour lost 60



Between them, the Conservatives and Labour won 76% of the vote



The Conservatives won 56% of seats, up from 49% in 2017



4. Insights into challenges and recommendations

The overall election setup and administration was found to be transparent, free and fair. The implementation of the election legislation was up to the mark. Similarly, the performance of the Electoral Commission and administration was satisfactory. The media played an impartial role during the election. The general arrangements pertaining to election including the conduct of polling staff and the count process were more than satisfactory. The results were reported accurately, honestly and in a timely manner. No incident of polarization, harassment or threat on voters' expression was reported.

The Accredited two International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) observers identified following areas that needs to be improved to enhance public interest in UK's Parliamentary democracy as well as overall inclusivity and strength of decisions the British Nation takes as one of the oldest contemporary democracy.

- I. As noted above, the United Kingdom lacks a consolidated electoral law. Scattered pieces of legislation are implemented to get things done. The formulation of a single consolidated electoral law may serve to further enhance an already well-functioning system. Such a law should encode the rights and responsibilities of the voters, candidates and the electoral administration.
- II. There were some lacunas with regard to party and candidate spending during election campaign. The audit system should be improved in order to make improvements in the overall system.
- III. The polling time period in UK comprises of single day. Increasing the polling time period to more than one day may serve to increase the voters' turnout and consequently strengthen the democratic setup.
- IV. The interest of people in the overall political process has shrunk. This is evident from the overall voters' turnout which was 67% down from 69% in 2017. This area needs attention. The electoral administration needs to put its efforts to increase the interest of people in the electoral process.

5. Conclusion

The UK Parliamentary general elections held on 12 December 2019 have ushered in a new era in the political history of UK. The elections commenced in a highly polarized environment divided on the issue of UK's relationship with the European Union.

The mainstream political parties of the United Kingdom were generally not against the EU membership since the commencement of the regional organization. However, in the aftermath of the 2016 referendum in which the masses opted for leaving the EU the two major political parties i.e. the Conservatives and Labour have resolved to execute the Brexit promise. Though both of them differ over the ways to that end.

The conduct of elections was generally smooth. No major incident of violence, harassment, or intimidation was widely reported. The role of the election administration and Electoral Commission was satisfactory. The conduct of election on polling day was largely smooth. The voters' turnout has reduced this time as compared with the previous elections. Hence, it suggests that the election administration needs to work upon this area in order to come up with enhanced voters' turnout in the next election.

According to the results, the Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, won the largest number of seats i.e. 365 and votes i.e. 43.6%. The percentage of vote gathered by Conservatives is significant for the fact it is the highest for any single party since the 43.9% won by Margaret Thatcher for the same party in 1979. The overwhelming victory of Conservatives has dashed all hopes for retention in the European Union.

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Sources of data

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- viii. Patrick O’Neil, Karl Fields and Don Share, *Cases in Comparative Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015).
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- xii. UK Legislation, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>.
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- xiv. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/suffrage>.

Glossary

Brexit:

The withdrawal of United Kingdom from the European Union.

Committee stage:

Committee stage is the first chance for line-by-line examination of the bill and an opportunity for amendments (changes) to be put forward.

Dissolution:

“Dissolution is the official term for the end of a Parliament.”

Election Observation:

“Electoral observation consists of systematic collection of information on an electoral process by direct observation on the basis of established methodologies, often analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. The process of observation usually leads to an evaluative public statement on the overall conduct of the electoral process.”

Report stage:

Report stage gives all members of the Lords a further opportunity to examine and make amendments (changes) to a bill.

Royal Assent:

Royal Assent is the monarch’s agreement to make the bill into an Act of Parliament (law).

Second Reading:

Second Reading is the first opportunity for members to debate the key principles and main purpose of the bill.

State Opening:

“The State Opening marks the formal start of the parliamentary year. The Queen’s Speech sets out the government’s proposed policies and legislation for the coming session.”

Suffrage:

Suffrage means, “the right to vote in an election, especially to vote for representative in a government.”

Third reading:

Third reading in the Lords is the chance for members to ‘tidy up’ a bill, concentrating on making sure the eventual law is effective and workable – without loopholes.

Writs:

Writs are legal documents which authorize the holding of a general election or by-election. When Parliament is dissolved prior to a general election, writs are issued declaring that an election be held in each constituency.

The Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011 removed the power of the Monarch to issue these writs, making it instead a statutory responsibility of the Lord Chancellor and, for Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. For a by-election the writ is issued by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Ways to vote:

Voting in person: most people visit a polling station on the day of a general election to place their vote. Polling stations are set up in local buildings across the UK, for example school or community halls. On election day, polling stations are open from 7am until 10pm to ensure as many people as possible can get there, for example before or after work or in a lunch break. Each voter will receive a poll card. The poll card will give the voter the details of where and when to vote in the designated area.

Voting by post: an alternative way to vote is by post. Anyone recorded in the electoral register can apply for a postal vote without assigning any reason. The voter needs to fill in a postal vote application form which is available from local electoral registration office. Postal voting in Northern Ireland varies from the rest of the UK.

Voting by proxy: a proxy vote means that the voter chooses someone trusts to vote on his/her behalf. Anyone can apply for a proxy vote by providing a reason for example if someone falls ill or if someone is abroad on Election Day.

Annexure-I

Selected Photographs



Annexure – II

Election Observation Questionnaire

Pre-Election Process

1. How do you assess:
 - a) Implementation of the election legislation?

- b) Performance of the election administration?

- c) Conduct of the election campaign, and

- d) Role of the media?

- e) How do you analyze the role of Electoral Commission?

Voting Day Processes

Results process and public reaction

2. Please share your insights with regard to the general arrangements,

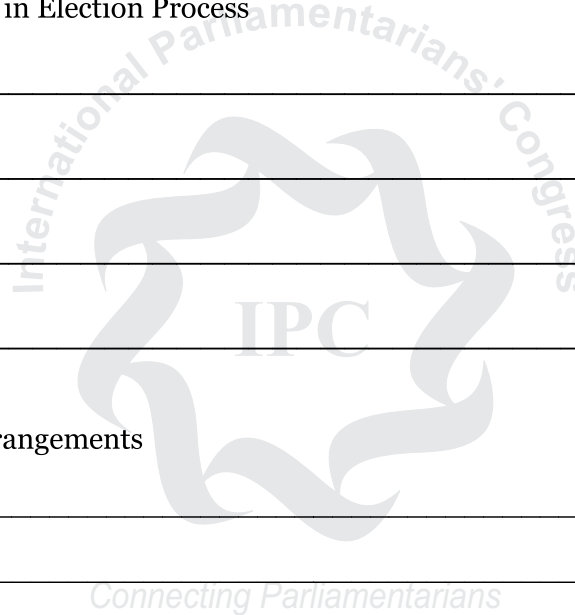
Comments with regard to:

- a) Interest of People in Election Process

- b) Polling station arrangements

- c) Conduct of Polling Staff

- d) Were the results reported accurately, honestly, and in a timely manner?



-
-
-
- e) Overall environment on Voting Day? (any incidents of polarization, harassment, threat on voters expression reported)
-
-
-

Insights into challenges and recommendations

- a) Narrate any incident to validate your opinion on challenges and way forward to improve electoral processes in UK?
-
-
-

Further comments, if any?

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Annexure – III

Election Observation Form

PS Name		Polling station Reg. No	
Registration #		Women's Station? (Y/N)	
District		Union Council	
Time of arrival at PS		Time of departure from PS	

Please try to take pictures and collect any Material & Forms at polling stations if and when possible

POLLING STATION SET UP AND ENVIRONMENT

1	Was the polling booth opened by 7 am?	Yes	No	1
2	Is the ballot box visible and sealed?	Yes	No	2
3	Is the booth set up so that the polling can be conducted in secret?	Yes	No	3
4	Does the booth have all the necessary materials such as ink, stamp, symbol list, ballots, electoral rolls, etc? <i>(If no, please explain in Notes section)</i>	Yes	No	4
5		Yes	No	5
6	Is the polling booth overcrowded?	Yes	No	6
7	Is any campaigning occurring within vicinity of the polling station?	Yes	No	7
8	Would accessing the polling booth be difficult for people with disabilities? <i>If yes, please describe in Notes section</i>	Yes	No	8

PERSONNEL IN THE POLLING BOOTH

9	Are all polling booth staff present? <i>If no, please indicate who is missing</i>		Yes	No	9
10	Are the following present inside the polling booth?	Candidates <i>(if yes, specify org)</i>	Yes	No	10
		Election agents <i>(if yes, specify group)</i>	Yes	No	
		Polling agents <i>(if yes, note which parties)</i>	Yes	No	
		Police Officers on duty <i>(if yes, specify police or military)</i>	Yes	No	
		Representatives of the Electoral Commission	Yes	No	
		Accredited Observers <i>(if yes, specify who)</i>	Yes	No	

		Persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters	Yes	No	
		Companions of disabled voters	Yes	No	
11	Are observers and/or candidate agents able to observe the process adequately?		Yes	No	11
12	Did observers, agents, security personnel, or unauthorized people interfere with the process? <i>If yes, explain in Notes</i>		Yes	No	12
13	Is there any male staff working in a female polling station/booth? <i>If yes, indicate how many male and how many female</i>		Yes	No	13

VOTING PROCESS

14	Did voters REGISTERED IN FORMAL ELECTORAL ROLL?	Always	Sometimes	Never	14
15	Are polling staff checking IDENTITY before issuing a voter his/her	Always	Sometimes	Never	15
16	Are voters being properly inked and ticked off the voter list?	Always	Sometimes	Never	16
17	Are ballots stamped and signed on the back before given to the voter?	Always	Sometimes	Never	17
18	Was anyone turned away for not having proper identification?	Many	Few	None	18
19	Was anyone turned away because they were not on the electoral roll?	Many	Few	None	19
20	Were any ineligible people allowed to vote? (For instance, someone not on the electoral rolls or with an already inked finger)	Many	Few	None	20
21	Did polling station staff conduct their duties fairly and responsibly? <i>If no, please explain in Notes section</i>	Yes No			21
22	Were any voters assisted to vote? <i>If yes, describe by whom in Notes section</i>	Yes No			22
23	Did the polling station run out of materials at any time during the day?	Yes No			23
24	Was the voting process disrupted or suspended at any time during the day? <i>If yes, explain why in Notes section</i>	Yes No			24
25	Did you witness any incidents of violence or intimidation? <i>If yes, please describe in Notes section</i>	Yes No			25
26	So far, how many tendered or challenged ballots have been cast? <i>Please ask Presiding Officer</i>				26
27	Overall, were there any major problems with the voting process?	Yes N			27

CLOSING AND COUNTING

28	Were voters in line at closing (10:00pm) allowed to cast their ballot?	Yes	No	28
29	Did officials follow the procedures for counting?	Yes	No	29
30	Were fair and impartial decisions made regarding invalid ballots? <i>If no, please explain in Notes section</i>	Yes	No	30

31	Did the ballots reconcile properly at the end of the count?	Yes	No	31
32	Did officials count the counterfoils of women ballots for gender disaggregated	Yes	No	32
33	Were observers and agents allowed to witness the counting process and receive a copy of the results form? <i>If no, please explain in Notes section</i>	Yes	No	33
34	Was the final result count posted outside of the polling station?	Yes	No	34

*****PLEASE GET A COPY OF THE RESULTS FORM AFTER THE COUNT*****

NOTES: Use the space below for general comments regarding the environment in and around the polling



station, and anything relevant of note at this polling booth.

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