

# IRELAND

## How much power?

The government in Ireland is based on a written constitution and led by their President. While the President is in charge, Ireland also has two houses of Parliament (like Congress) that help make the decisions. The spots in these houses are held by the people which means they can influence the government's decisions.



## How did the leader get there?

President Michael Higgins has been in power since November 2011. He's only Ireland's 9<sup>th</sup> President! Technically he is in charge of the government but in actuality he doesn't hold much power. Most power is held by someone called the Taoiseach (Prime Minister). Both positions are gained through election; though, only the President is elected by the people.



## How do the people influence decisions?

To influence decisions, the citizens of Ireland can do multiple things. First, if they wish, they may run for office and become a member of Parliament. These members are the ones who discuss issues and make decisions. To become a member of the lower house, you must get voted into office. If the people are unhappy with the decisions being made, they simply vote to replace their member of Parliament.

# VATICAN CITY

## How much power?

Vatican City is known for being the smallest country on Earth and is the home of the leaders of the Catholic Church, who also run the government. These people are not elected by anyone. Instead they chose to lead a religious life

and have been able to work their way up to hold a high position in the Church. Only these leaders are trusted to make decisions for the country.



## How did the leader get there?

Officially, most people think that the Pope is the leader of Vatican City and, in a way, he is. Pope Francis has been in charge since March of 2013. The problem is that the Pope is also in charge of the entire Catholic Church so he can't spend a lot of time worrying about what's happening in Vatican City. Therefore, the Pope chooses a President to take care of the politics for him.



## How do the people influence decisions?

The leaders are really the ones that make most of the decisions because they are trusted members of the Church. It took them a long time to get to that position so everyone believes that they will be able to do it on their own. Not only that, there really aren't any people that live in Vatican City other than the members of the Church so, by default, the people don't influence decisions because there are no people!



# LIECHTENSTEIN

## How much power?

Liechtenstein is an incredibly small country located in Europe. There have been years of debates to try to change their type government but it's tough to get everyone to agree so for now, we're just going to ignore that. Most of the power is held by their head of state (kind of like the US has a President). For Liechtenstein, this person is known as their Prince.

## How did the leader get there?

The current Prince of Liechtenstein is named Prince Hans-Adam II. He has been in charge since November of 1989. When he dies, his son will become the new Prince of Liechtenstein. When an heir (his son) receives a title (Prince) after the previous leader dies that means they inherited their position. The Prince does not need to be chosen by the people.



## How do the people influence decisions?

Again, most power is held by the Prince. He makes most of the decisions for the country and doesn't have to worry about getting elected. That means he gets to do almost anything he wants. The people don't have the power to impeach him or replace him. Ultimately, the people don't have much power, if any, in Liechtenstein, but that's okay because Prince Hans has been a good leader so far!



# UNITED KINGDOM

## How much power?

The United Kingdom is ruled by either a King or Queen depending on who is in line for the throne. They also have a Prime Minister and a house of Parliament. Parliament is made up of two houses, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The members in the House of Commons are elected which means the people do have a say in their government.

## How did the leader get there?

The United Kingdom is led by arguably the most famous leader in the world, Queen Elizabeth II. She has been in power since February of 1952. While there is a Prime Minister to oversee the government, the Queen is still the highest-ranking person in the United Kingdom. Unlike the Prime Minister, she inherited her throne when her father, King George VI died. Queen Elizabeth II also rules over Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.



## How do the people influence decisions?

Queen Elizabeth does not really need to listen to what her people want because they did not elect her. Her position allows her to make decisions and not have to worry about being reelected. She is a good monarch though, and does listen to the needs and opinions of her people. Further, the members in the House of Commons are voted into office by the people just like our Senators and Representatives in the United States.





# SWITZERLAND

## How much power?

The government in Switzerland is the only of its kind in the world. Instead of placing all of the power in the hands of a President or Prime Minister,

Switzerland gives all its power to the people. It is very easy for the Swiss people to change things that they don't like about their government or to reverse decisions that they don't agree with. They do still have people that run the government, but ultimately their decisions aren't always final.

## How did the leader get there?

Technically, Switzerland doesn't have just one leader. Instead, they have a total of 7 Presidents that form a council. Right now, President Alain Berset will be in that position for the next year and then one of the other members will take her place. These 7 Presidents are elected by other members of the government and get to lead the departments of government.



## How do the people influence decisions?

Switzerland's unique system of government allows their people to vote on almost anything. While in the US, we don't get to challenge the decisions of our Senators, the Swiss can vote on if they like the decisions being made or not. When they do want to challenge something, each and every single vote is counted to determine the outcome. If the majority of the people don't like the decision, it is reversed.

# BELARUS

## How much power?

Belarus, like many countries, has a group of people, in addition to their leader, that run the government. Most of these people are chosen by the President which means

he can make sure all of the people in power agree with what he wants. Because the President chooses everyone, the people don't really have any power or say in their government.

## How did the leader get there?

The leader of Belarus is given the title of President and, so far, they've only had one. The current leader is President Alexander Lukashenko who has been president since the office was created in 1994. Lukashenko has managed to stay in power by changing laws to ensure he gets "elected" every single time the people vote, like eliminating term limits and increasing how long the President is in power.



## How do the people influence decisions?

The people of Belarus are given the option to participate; however, Belarus is known for its corrupt government. Not only has the President changed the laws to stay in power, there is evidence that elections are rigged. This means that the people "vote" based on issues but the government changes the results to what they want them to be. Ultimately, the people don't have the power to influence decisions in Belarus.