VATICAN CITY by Andreas M. Wüst 1. Introduction 1.1 Historical Overview Covering an area of just 44 hectares and with less than 1,000 citizens, the Vatican City is not only the smallest sovereign state in Europe, but in the world. The enclave, which lies primarily within Italy’s capital Rome, eventually became sovereign by the Lateran Treaties arranged between the state of Italy and The Holy See in 1929. The Vatican City’s head of state is the head of Roman Catholics and Bishop of Rome, the Pope. Referring to the Vatican usually means The Holy See and not the Vatican City, and the micro-state is unthinkable without the Roman Catholic Church and its head. Yet, the pope is the only person in the Vatican City who is elected, even if not by the small citiocracy, but by an even smaller number of eligible cardinals. Becoming head of the Roman Catholic Church automatically makes him a life-long monarch of the Vatican City bearing supreme legislative, executive and judiciary power. Among other officials, the pope appoints the cardinal secretary of state who acts on his behalf and who can be considered the prime minister of the Vatican City. There is a long history of areas ruled by the Bishop of Rome in his secular role. The Roman Emperor Constantine I legalized Christianity in the early fourth century, enabling the church to own land. While the Donation of Constantine, granting the papacy power over the city of Rome and over the whole Occident, is a forgery of the eighth century, by Pope Gregory X (1274), the French Revolution had a direct effect on The Papal States, since Pius VI called the beheaded French king Louis XVI a martyr. French troops occupied The Papal States, pope Pius VI fled, but was captured and died in exile (1799). The Papal States were only restored in 1800 and, after another French occupation (1808), again in 1814. However, the restoration of the Papal States along with reactionary papal policies to 1846, did not last. From 1848 on, the nation-building process in Italy gradually built an end to the Papal States. In 1870, papal influence was reduced to The Vatican by Italy’s new government, and in 1871, Rome became Italy’s capital. For about fifty years, the Vatican hoped for restoration, but entered negotiations with Italy in 1926 which resulted in the Lateran Treaties of 1929 creating a sovereign micro-state, the Vatican City. Even though it is The Holy See and not the Vatican City that holds diplomatic relations with other countries and organizations, a recognized national territory has been and undoubtedly remains helpful to be recognized as a sovereign entity. Without a territory (1870–1929), The Holy See was only recognized as a sovereign entity by some countries. While nation-building, democratization, and secularization reduced the institutional power of the Vatican to insignificance, several popes of the 20th century have contributed to establish The Holy See as a respected super-national moral authority, especially in foreign relations. Benedict XVs extremely criticized World War I, and made several attempts to end the war. And John Paul II not only fought for an end of communist suppression in Europe (and in his home country Poland), but also encouraged the Roman Catholic Church to be a protector of the poor and suppressed around the world. While the moral authority of the Vatican in foreign relations and with regard to humanitarian issues is widely accepted, the positions of The Holy See on a myriad of social issues are not. It is the continuing exclusion of women from almost all offices in the Roman Catholic Church and the infallibility of the elective monarch which make the Vatican a highly ambiguous institution in the democratic age. Vatican City 2037! 1.2 Evolution of Electoral Provisions Since many popes have set and revised electoral provisions, only the most important ones are documented here. In Roman times, the Bishop of Rome was chosen by the local clergy and by the citizens of Rome. In 768, deacons and priests of the Roman Catholic Church were chosen as the exclusive electors of the pontiff by Stephen V. And in 1059, the electorates were limited to cardinal bishops, initially to the ones in Rome’s immediate neighborhood. In 1586, an upper limit of 70 for the number of cardinals was introduced by Sixtus V. This limit was raised to 75 by Pope John XXIII only four hundred years later (1958), and to 144 by his successor, Paul VI (1973). This increase reflects the geographical spread of appointed cardinals outside Europe in the 20th century. It was Paul VI who also started to differentiate between cardinals with voting rights and non-voting cardinals (1962). In 1975, Paul VI introduced a limit of 120 cardinal electors, while also stating no cardinal elector shall be deprived of his voting rights. John Paul II approved these changes, but carefully revised some details. The qualified majority of at least two thirds of the votes was first introduced by Alexander II in 1179 (Third Lateran Council). In 1276 the requirement of a two-thirds majority lost its exclusivity. Celestine V created two alternative ways to get elected: by an undoubted ‘acclamation’ of a cardinal and by ‘consensus’ between rival voting blocs. In 1562, a fourth way to get elected was introduced by Pius IV, the ‘accessus’, each voter could openly change his choice after a ballot. These rules became more formalized by Gregory XV in 1621 and 1622 requiring secret votes and, if conducted, also secret access. Ever since, secret balloting has been the rule. In 1945, Pius XII raised the required majority to two thirds plus one vote. In 1996, John Paul II not only reestablished secret balloting and the two-thirds majority rule of 1179, but he also introduced a revolutionary element by giving the cardinals the option of lowering the two-thirds majority after at least 33 unsuccessful ballots, including the opportunity of arranging a run-off between the two cardinals who had received the most votes. Since the constitution of Ubi periculum, by Pope Gregory X (1274), the election started on the evening of the tenth day after a pope passed away. This waiting period made it easier for cardinals to travel to a Vatican City 2038 papal election in time. According to the Roman tradition, there are nine days of mourning for the dead pope (novembiale sacram) during which he is also buried. In 1904, Pius X affirmed a minimal waiting period of ten days between a pope’s death and the beginning of a conclave. In 1922, Pius XI extended this period to a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 18 days, and John Paul II extended the maximum to 20 days. According to Ubi periculum (1274), papal elections had to be carried out at a place where the electors are isolated for a new pope is elected (conclave, meaning room or chamber). Originally, the conclave was invented to accelerate the electoral process, since it took almost three years for Gregory X to finally be elected (1274). Also, it certainly helped to keep some if not all proceedings of an election secret. Most conclaves have been held in Rome. Of the elections documented, only the first one (1799/1800) took place in Venice as Rome was occupied by the French. The following four elections (1823, 1829, 1831, and 1846) were held at the Quirinal Palace in Rome, and since 1878, all papal elections have taken place in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. John Paul II has finally codified this location. 1.3 Current Electoral Provisions Sources: Universi Domini Gregis (UDG) of Pope John Paul II, published 22 February 1996. Suffrage: Ordinary citizens of the Vatican City have no voting rights. Suffrage is limited to cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church who have not reached the age of 80 years on the day of death (or resignation) of a pope. Voting among eligible cardinals is equal, direct, secret (per scrutinium), and compulsory. Elected national institutions: The pope. Nomination of candidates: There is no official nomination. In principle, all single, catholic men are eligible. De facto, since 1378 all popes elected have been cardinals. If a pope-elect was not a bishop before the election, he would be consecrated right after the election in the conclave. Electional System: Qualified majority system. A majority of two thirds of all electors attending the conclave is required. Up to four ballots are Vatican City 2039 held each day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. UDG requires non-voting days after four days of the conclave, and again after seven, ...
Under electoral system of Russia if none of the candidates manages to win by an absolute majority in the first round, a second election round is held between two candidates with the most votes preferred. There has been in all six elections held in Russia for Presidency and seven for Parliament since 1990.