

# **Direct democracy in the 21st century: challenges and pitfalls**

## **Abstract**

The thesis deals with the position of direct democracy in the 21st century, what are its advantages and disadvantages and problem areas. Before that, it briefly presents why such strong voices calling for direct democracy have been heard in recent years.

The first part of the thesis describes the emergence of representative democracy and how this process was influenced by opinions on direct democracy. Furthermore, the reasons for the existence of representative democracy are outlined and the theory behind it is briefly introduced.

In its second part, the thesis discusses, in greater detail, the present of representative democracy, what are its advantages and disadvantages and what problems it faces, which quite possibly threaten its very existence. In this part the thesis is based, among other things, on sociological findings, especially in Czech society. These problems largely explain frequent considerations about the implementation of direct democracy.

The third part turns its attention to direct democracy exclusively and describes its history, more precisely, important passages from it. It also describes the theoretical foundations of direct democracy, in which the defense of direct democracy by its promoters is hidden to some extent.

By the fourth part of the thesis, a closer look at direct democracy is brought. It focuses on the instruments of direct democracy, mainly on a referendum. It describes its types and classifications, which are based on the functioning of this instrument around the world. The most extensive chapter of the thesis is the second chapter of this part, which discusses in detail the advantages and disadvantages of direct democracy in the 21st century. Attention is paid to the problem of the competence of voters, the polarization of society and the distortion of the will of the people while voting in a referendum. It describes what could be jeopardized by application of direct democracy, how it could damage democracy.

At the end of the thesis, there is a deliberation over current suitability of implementation of direct democracy. What would have to be adjusted in order to reduce the harmful effects of direct democracy described earlier in the thesis. The thesis considers the implementation of direct democracy to be a high game with a very uncertain outcome at present and does not recommend it. However, a distinction needs to be made between national and local referendums.