

Do the math: Crimea's referendum figures don't add up

KIEV — [The Globe and Mail](#), Paul Waldie

Published Tuesday, Mar. 18 2014, 6:28 AM EDT

Officials in Crimea have been touting the results of Sunday's referendum on whether the territory should join Russia, and rightfully so. Any politician would dream of winning a landslide of 96.77 per cent.

But a closer look at some of tallies shows that some of the figures don't add up. Take the voter turnout in the Crimean port city of Sevastopol for example.

At the time the polls closed at 8 p.m. on Sunday, referendum organizer Mikhail Malyshev said 1,250,426 people had cast their ballots. But he said that figure excluded Sevastopol. When Sevastopol was added in, Mr. Malyshev said the total was 1,724,563. That meant that 474,137 people voted in Sevastopol ($1,724,563 - 1,250,426 = 474,137$).

A quick look at the latest population figures for the city, from Nov. 1, 2013, shows that Sevastopol's entire population, including children, was 385,462. That means that somehow 88,675 extra adults managed to vote in the city. Put another way, Sevastopol's voter turnout was a stunning 123 per cent.

Mr. Malyshev had still different figures on Monday. During a special meeting of the Crimean Supreme Council, he reported the total number of voters as 1,274,096, according to the government's website. Of that total, 1,233,002, or 96.77 per cent, had voted in favour of joining Russia.

Monday's new total was 450,467 less than the 1,724,563, turnout he announced on Sunday. It's not clear if the new figure didn't include Sevastopol. But even if it didn't include the city, the tally is still off.

If Monday's total did not include Sevastopol, that would leave 450,467 voters in the city; $1,724,563$ total voters announced on Sunday - $1,274,096$ total voters announced Monday = 450,467. That's lower than Sunday's tally of 474,137 but it is still much higher than the city's official population of 385,462.

Let's say Mr. Malyshev simply made a mistake on Sunday and that his initial total number of voters of 1,250,426 really did include Sevastopol, making the 1,724,563 amount wrong. But Monday's total is 23,670 higher, meaning somehow more ballots were cast or someone got their counting wrong.