

## AUSTRIA

**Date of Elections:** March 1, 1970

### Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Austria consists of 2 Houses:

— The National Council (*Nationalrat*), whose 165 members are elected for 4 years and represent the whole nation.

— The Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) composed of 54 members elected by provincial diets. The most populated province is represented by 12 federal Councillors; a quota is obtained by dividing the number of its inhabitants by 12, and this figure is used to calculate the number of representatives (at least 3) that each province may have on the Federal Council.

On March 1, 1970, Austrian citizens went to the polls to renew the National Council upon the normal expiry of the previous legislature.

### Electoral System

All Austrian citizens of either sex are entitled to vote, provided they are at least 19 years old on January 1 of the election year, are neither certified insane nor have been sentenced for a crime.

Voting is compulsory in the 3 federal provinces of Styria, the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, for all members of the electorate who cannot provide a valid justification for having been prevented from voting. The electoral lists are revised constantly.

All members of the electorate who are at least 25 years old on January 1 of the election year are eligible for the Parliament, with the exception of certain Presidents and members of High Courts. Candidatures must be presented in a given constituency by 200 citizens entitled to vote.

The members of the National Council are elected in 25 constituencies by party list system with proportional representation, the seats being distributed according to the Hagenbach-Bischoff method. (The electoral quota is established by dividing the number of valid votes in each constituency by the number of seats to be filled, plus one.)

A second distribution at the national level is carried out on the basis of the remaining votes and according to the d'Hondt method.

Casual vacancies in either House are filled by alternates elected as such at the same time as national and federal Councillors.

## General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Since the formation of the II<sup>nd</sup> Republic in 1945, the political scene in Austria has been dominated by 2 parties: the People's Party (Conservative), successor to the Christian Social Party, led by the retiring Chancellor, Mr. Klaus; and the Socialist Party, headed by Mr. Kreisky and which stemmed from the former Social Democratic Party as well as the revolutionary Socialists. In 1945, these two parties formed a coalition with the aim of ensuring the reconstruction of the State of Austria, but this alliance was broken before the 1966 elections which were won by the People's Party.

The other political formations are the Liberal Party, constantly represented in the Parliament, the Communist Party which has not held a seat since 1956, the National Democratic Party and, finally, the Democratic Freedom Party, founded in 1966 by dissident Socialists under the leadership of Mr. Olah and which is already in decline.

The two main parties as well as the Freedom and Communist Parties campaigned in all 25 constituencies, while the Democratic Freedom Party put up candidates in 20 constituencies and the National Democratic Party in only 7.

The People's Party, which took credit for the country's considerable economic expansion, brought few new ideas into the electoral campaign. However, the Socialists insisted on the need for the introduction of fundamentally new methods and for fiscal, military and electoral reforms.

With the announcement of the results which gave a rather unexpected victory to the Socialists, some observers thought that this was partly due to the positions taken by Socialist candidates which attracted young people who, voting for the first time at the age of 19 as opposed to 21, wished to bring about certain changes.

It will also be noted that the People's Party recorded losses in the rural areas in which it had previously been strong.

Having considered and then abandoned the idea of establishing first a narrow coalition Government (Socialist-Liberal), and then a broad coalition (Socialist-Liberal), Mr. Kreisky formed, on April 21, a cabinet composed solely of members of his Party.

## Statistics

### 1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Nationalrat*

Number of registered voters. . . . .	5,045,714
Voters. . . . .	4,678,593 (92.9%)
Void or blank ballot papers. . . . .	43,331
Valid votes. . . . .	4,635,262

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats in the <i>Nationalrat</i>
Socialist Party (SPOe) . . . . .	2,235,905	48.4	81 (+7)
People's Party (OeVP) . . . . .	2,078,010	44.69	79 (-6)
Freedom Party (FPOe) . . . . .	254,363	5.45	5 (-1)
Communist Party (KPOe) . . . . .	46,689	0.40	- (-)
Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) . . . . .	17,405	0.35	- (=)
National Democratic Party (NPD)	3,484	0.10	- (=)
Others . . . . .	237	-	- (=)
			165

*2. Distribution of Members of the Nationalrat  
according to Professional Category*

Salaried clerks . . . . .	59
Civil servants . . . . .	50
Merchants and businessmen . . . . .	.19
Farmers . . . . .	.19
Workers . . . . .	.10
Others . . . . .	.8
	165

*Distribution of Members of the Nationalrat  
according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	157
Women . . . . .	8
	165

4. Average Age: 51