

AUSTRIA

Date of Elections: October 5, 1975

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the National Council on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Austria consists of the National Council (*Nationalrat*) and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*).

The National Council is composed of 183 members elected for 4 years. The Federal Council comprises 58 members elected by the country's nine provincial assemblies for terms based on the term of office (up to 6 years) of the provincial legislatures delegating them.

Electoral System

Any Austrian citizen at least 19 years old on January 1 of the election year is entitled to vote for members of the National Council if registered as an elector within the constituency in which he is residing. Disqualified are the insane, criminals, persons confined to a workhouse and parents who have lost their rights over their children.

Electoral registers are compiled on the municipal level and revised continuously. Voting is compulsory in three provinces (Styria, Tyrol and Vorarlberg), abstentionists being fined.

All qualified electors at least 25 years old on January 1 of the election year may be candidates for the National Council. Candidates for the Federal Council must reside in the *Land* which delegates them and must be eligible for, but not necessarily members of, their provincial legislature. Members of the Constitutional Court and the Administrative Court, the President and Vice-President of the Government Audit Office and executives of joint stock companies, banking, commerce, transport and industrial private limited companies, provincial credit institutes and mutual insurance companies are among those persons who cannot simultaneously be members of Parliament.

Candidates for the National Council are nominated by political parties and must be supported either by three outgoing members of the National Council or, depending on the population of the constituency, by anywhere from 200

to 500 electors. For each constituency in which it proposes a candidate a party must pay a deposit equivalent to US\$325 to the Federal Government; this sum is to meet the expenses of printing the ballot papers and is not refundable. The number of candidates put forward by each party cannot be more than twice the number of seats to be filled.

For elections to the National Council each of the country's nine provinces comprises an electoral constituency; the number of seats allotted to each is based on its population. Seats are distributed among the parties presenting lists of candidates on the basis of proportional representation calculated according to the Hagenbach-Bischoff method, the electoral quota within each constituency being established by dividing the number of seats to be filled, plus one, into the total number of valid votes; every party is given one seat for every completed number of times which this quota is contained in the number of votes cast for it. Seats remaining to be filled after applying this quota are subsequently distributed on the national level on the basis of the d'Hondt rule of highest average, applied to each party's surplus votes. Vote-splitting between different lists is permitted.

In the Federal Council, the number of representatives from each *Land* (at least 3) depends on its population (the most populated has 12 representatives). The seats are divided between the parties according to the number of seats they hold in the provincial assemblies, which are determined on the basis of proportional representation.

A vacancy arising in the *Nationalrat* between general elections is filled by the individual who is "next-in-line" on the list of the party which formerly held the seat. Alternate members chosen at the same time as titular members fill vacancies in the *Bundesrat*.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The two main contestants in the 1975 elections were once again the ruling Socialist Party (SPO), led by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, and the People's Party (OVP), which had been politically dominant in Austria from 1945 to 1970.

During the election campaign, Mr. Joseph Taus, who had taken over the leadership of the OVP shortly before the elections following the accidental death of Mr. Karl Schleinzer, focused mainly on economic and employment questions. Mr. Kreisky stressed his Government's success in effecting economic growth and emphasized that his policy of public expenditure had helped to maintain full employment. Joining the two major parties in fielding candidates in all constituencies were the Liberal Party (FPO) and the Communist Party (KPC-).

The voting results succeeded in maintaining exactly the same distribution of National Council seats among the SPO, OVP and FPO as after the 1971 general elections*, with the SPO keeping its absolute majority position.

Mr. Kreisky's Cabinet, which remained unchanged, was sworn in on October 28.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Council

Number of registered voters.	5,019,168
Voters.	4,662,684 (92.9%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	49,252
Valid votes.	4,613,432

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Socialist Party (SPO).	2,326,201	50.4	93 (=)
People's Party (OVP).	1,981,291	43.0	80 (=)
Liberal Party (FPO).	249,444	5.4	10 (=)
Communist Party (KPO).	55,032	1.2	
Others.	1,464		

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2. Distribution of Members of the National Council according to Professional Category

Salaried clerks.	60
Civil servants.	59
Self-employed.	20
Manual workers.	17
Farmers.	17
Doctors.	3
Lawyers.	3
Housewives.	3
Sociologist.	1

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* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections VI (1971-1972)*, p. 23.

3. *Distribution of Members of the National Council
according to Sex*

Men169
Women14
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4. *Distribution of Members of the National Council
according to Age Group*

30-40 years.15
40-50.68
50-60.83
Over 60.17
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