

CYPRI'S

Date of Elections: 24 May 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for the 35 members of Parliament representing the country's Greek community following premature dissolution of the House of Representatives. General elections were not normally due until August 1981.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Constitution of Cyprus provides for a system of government in which power is to be shared by the island's Greek and Turkish communities in proportion to their numbers. The 50-seat national House of Representatives accordingly has 70% (35) of its members elected by the Greek community and 30% (15) by the Turkish community. All Deputies have 5-year terms of office.

Electoral System

All citizens have the right to vote in general elections if they are at least 21 years of age and have resided in Cyprus for a minimum of six months prior to the qualifying date (as elector). Disqualified, however, are the insane, persons who have been legally detained or imprisoned during the entire period they have qualified as electors, and persons convicted of electoral fraud.

A permanent Central Electoral Service in the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the compilation and revision of the electoral register; this register is revised and supplemented every three months. Voting is compulsory, unjustified failure to do so resulting in a fine.

Qualified electors who are at least 25 years old on the date of their nomination are eligible for election as Representatives. Ineligible are persons under sentence of imprisonment for a term of five years or more for any offence or for a term of two years or more for any offence involving violence, injury to personal honour, dishonesty or moral turpitude. The office of parliamentarian is incompatible with elective ministerial or municipal offices, membership of the armed or security forces, national or municipal public service and, in the case of a Representative elected by the Turkish community, the post of religious functionary.

A candidate must be supported by at least four registered electors and his nomination must be accompanied by a deposit of 100 Cyprus pounds, which is forfeited if the candidate does not obtain votes equalling at least one-third of the electoral quota.

For the purpose of electing representatives of the Greek Cypriot community, six districts are delineated; each is entitled to a different number of Representatives varying, according to population, from 12 (the district of Nicosia) to two (the district of Kyrenia). All Deputies

are chosen according to a system of proportional representation whereby party lists or individual candidates may be presented. Voters first single out the list of candidates of their choice and then, within the list, mark one name for every four seats to be filled in their district. In districts returning less than four members, only one name may be marked on the ballot paper; where only one list of candidates is put forward, no voting takes place.

Seats are distributed among lists within each district by dividing the total number of votes cast for each list by an electoral quota (obtained by dividing the total number of votes cast in the district by the number of seats to be filled). Individual independent candidates who have obtained at least as many votes as the electoral quota are considered elected. After this operation, the remaining seats are distributed among parties which have gained at least one seat in any constituency pursuant to the first distribution plus at least 8% of all valid votes cast throughout the island or, alternatively, at least 10% of all such valid votes without having gained a seat. Within a list, the choice of candidates declared elected is based on the number of votes cast for each of them and, where the votes are equally divided, the seat is awarded to the candidate whose name appears first on the list.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary seats which fall vacant between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Premature dissolution of the House of Representatives came about after the introduction of a new electoral system in July 1979*¹; it was then considered that elections should be held as early as possible.

Seven political parties, represented by 252 candidates, as well as a number of independent candidates vied for the 35 seats at stake (there are 15 other seats set aside for the island's Turkish Cypriot population, but they have boycotted the Parliament since 1963). Major contestants were the ruling centre-right Democratic Party (DIKO) of President of the Republic Spyros Kyprianou (who had succeeded Archbishop Makarios in 1977), the communist Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), led by Mr. E. Papaioannou, the rightist Democratic Rally of former Speaker G. Clerides, and the socialist Unified Democratic Union of Cyprus (EDEK). The election campaign was vigorously waged, primary issues raised being the lack of progress in the inter-communal (Greek and Turkish) talks about the country's future, economic questions, and a foreign policy stance favouring alignment or non-alignment.

On polling day, voter turnout was high. The final outcome reflected the polarization of opinion in Cyprus between right and left, as the pro-Western Democratic Rally and AKEL each won 12 seats and seemed to have benefited from popular discontent with the performance of the outgoing Government; DIKO came in third with eight seats.

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIV (1979-1980)*, pp. 10-11.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the House of Representatives*

Number of registered electors.	308,729	
Voters.	295,602	(95.75%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	4,581	
Valid votes.	291,021	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	Percentage	Number of Seats
Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL)	35	95,364	32.77	12 (+ 3)
Democratic Rally.	35	92,886	31.92	12 (+12)
Democratic Party (DIK.O).	35	56,749	19.50	8 (- -13)
Unified Democratic Union of Cyprus (EDEK).	35	23,772	8.17	3 (- 1)
Others	05	21,667	7.44	- (. . .)
Independents.	6	583	0.20	- (- -1)
				35

2. *Distribution of Representatives according
to Professional Category*

Lawyers.11
Doctors.4
Architects.2
Businessmen.2
Economists.2
Trade unionists.2
Officials of farmers* associations.2
Others.10
	35

3. *Distribution of Representatives
according to Sex*

Men.	34
Women	1
	35

4. *Distribution of Representatives
according to Age Group*

30-40 years.7
41-50.	9
51-60.	8
61-70.	9
Over 70.	2
	35