

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Date of Elections: September 28, 1969.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany consists of 2 Houses:

— The *Bundestag* (Federal Diet) composed of 496 members, half of whom are elected by simple plurality in 248 constituencies, the other half by party list system in each of the 11 Federal States. In addition to these 496 members, there are 22 representatives of West Berlin, appointed by the city's House of Deputies, and without voting powers.

The 518 deputies are appointed for 4 years.

— The *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) consists of 41 members appointed by the governments of the 11 States, and 4 delegates for West Berlin. Each State has the right to appoint at least 3 representatives, those whose population exceeds 2 million appoint 4, and those with more than 6 million inhabitants appoint 5.

The elections of September 28 were held to renew the entire *Bundestag* upon the normal expiry of the 5th legislature.

Electoral System

Every citizen, of 21 years of age* on polling day and who has resided in a constituency for at least 3 months has the right to vote, with the exception of those under guardianship or deprived of their civil rights by court order and the mentally deficient. Soldiers and civil servants and members of their families residing abroad may participate in the voting.

The electoral lists are prepared by the local authorities of each constituency and published between 21 and 14 days before the elections. They are closed at the latest on the day before polling day. Provided he has an elector's card prepared on request by the local authority of his district, an elector may vote in any polling station in his constituency, or vote by correspondence.

Any member of the electorate who is at least 25 years of age** and has held German nationality for at least 1 year is entitled to stand for election. The office of President of the Republic, member of the constitutional court and any other public office is incompatible with the parliamentary mandate.

* The voting age was lowered to 18 in June 1970. See section on *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 14.

** The age of eligibility was lowered to 21 in June 1970. See section on *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 14.

All candidatures to the *Bundestag* must be submitted at least 34 days before the elections. For the seats filled by simple plurality, candidatures are presented by either a political party or a group of 200 electors. For the seats filled by party list system, candidatures are presented by the party executive committees, with the approval of their congress. A party that was not represented by at least 5 members in the previous legislature may submit lists which must be accompanied by the signatures of at least 2,000 electors.

A candidate may be presented for both a constituency and a list.

Each elector has 2 votes. He votes for the candidate of his choice to elect, by simple plurality system, one deputy for his constituency; he also votes for the list of his choice to elect several deputies for each of the 11 Federal States.

Seats filled by party-list system are distributed in the following manner. The lists of parties that failed to obtain at the national level 5 % of the votes or 3 seats by simple plurality system are eliminated. In each State a system of theoretical proportional distribution of seats, according to the d'Hondt method, between the remaining lists is then applied to *all* the seats to which that State is entitled, based on the number of votes polled by the lists. Each list receives a number of seats equal to the difference between the number of seats won by its candidates under the simple plurality system and the number to which it would have been entitled according to the theoretical proportional distribution carried out previously. Should a party win a greater number of seats under the simple plurality system than that to which it would have been entitled by the proportional representation system, the party retains these seats.

Seats distributed between the lists are then allocated to the candidates in the order in which their names appeared on each list. The candidates next-in-line act as alternates should a casual vacancy arise during a legislature.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections.

The central feature of the electoral campaign was the confrontation, on almost equal terms, between the two parties that had been allied since 1966 in the so-called "grand coalition" Government: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), in power for the last 20 years, and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), recently associated with governmental responsibilities. This confrontation resulted, as at the time of a presidential election, in a duel between Dr. K. G. Kiesinger, the outgoing Chancellor and leader of the CDU, and Mr. Willy Brandt, leader of the CSU: victory for either party would ensure its leader of becoming Chancellor.

The CDU candidates opposed recognition of the German Democratic Republic and stated that only a peace-treaty approved between the two parts could establish Germany's eastern frontiers with Poland. They also advocated

the strengthening of European ties, a directly elected European Parliament and the maintenance of a very close alliance with the United States, through Nato. On internal matters, they were in favour of an electoral reform to lower the voting age and to introduce the simple plurality system, and their campaign slogan was: " Security and Prosperity in the Seventies". It should be noted that, in Bavaria, the CDU is replaced by the Christian Social Union under Mr. F. J. Strauss.

The Social Democrats advocated an active peace policy through the country's renunciation of nuclear arms and the opening of talks with leaders of the German Democratic Republic so as to set up the conditions for peaceful coexistence between the two halves of Germany. On domestic policy, they campaigned under the slogan: " Success, Stability, Reform".

The Liberal Party (FDP), in opposition since 1966, hoped to win enough seats to play the part of arbitrator between the two big parties. Led by Mr. W. Scheel, the FDP's economic programme was fairly conservative, but its political programme was more progressive, favouring the conclusion of a treaty with the German Democratic Republic. On this point they took a less rigid and extremist stand than those advocated by other parties.

Finally, of the 9 other parties contesting the election, the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD) hoped to confirm at the national level its earlier successes in regional elections.

The election results revealed the strengthening of the two-party trend with the collapse of the FDP. The decision of its leaders to form an alliance with the SDP allowed the latter to transform its upsurge into a victory and to form the Government. The NPD failed to make its mark at the national level and has no representative in the *Bundestag*.

Statistics

1. *Resxds of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Bundestag*

Number of registered voters.	38,677,235
Voters.	33,523,064 (86.6 %)
Void or blank ballot papers.	557,040
Vahd votes (Party List).	32,966,024

Political Group	Votes obtained		/o		
	Simple Plurality	Party List	Simple Plurality	Party List	
Social Democratic Party (SPD)	14,402,374	14,065,716	44.0	42.7	22
Christian Democratic Union (CDU)	12,137,148	12,079,535]	37.11	36.61	193
(CDU/CSU)		[15,195,187	'46.6	[46.1	
Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU)	3,094,176	3,115,652	9.5J	9.5J	49
Free Democratic Party (FDP)	1,554,651	1,903,422	4.8	5.8	3
National Democratic Party (NDP)	1,189,375	1,422,010	3.6	4.3	
Action for Democratic Progress (ADF)	209,180	197,331	0.6	0.6	
Bavarian Party (BP)	54,940	49,694	0.2	0.2	
Europa Party	20,927	49,650	0.1	0.1	
All-German Party (GDP)	—*	45,401		0.1	
Free Social Union — Democratic Centre (FSU)	10,192	16,371	0.0	0.0	
Centre Party (Zentrum)	—*	15,933		0.0	
Independent Workers' Party — German Socialists (UAP)	1,531	5,309	0.0	0.0	
German People's Party (DV)	461	—**	0.0		
Independents	38,561	—***	0.1		

* This party did not present candidates for voting by simple plurality system.

** This party did not present candidates for voting by party list system.

*** Independents cannot be party list candidates.

2. Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex

	CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Total
Men	236	219	29	484
Women . . .	14	18	2	34
	250	237	31	518

3. Average Age: 49