

GERMANY (FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF)

Date of Elections: 6 March 1983

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in the *Bundestag* following the premature dissolution of this body on 7 January 1983. General elections had previously been held on 4 October 1980.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany consists of the *Bundestag* (Federal Assembly) and the *Bundesrat* (Federal Council).

Generally, the *Bundestag* is composed of 518 Deputies, of whom 496 are elected by universal suffrage and 22 by the House of Representatives of West Berlin. In the 1983 elections, 520 Deputies were elected (see below).

The term of the *Bundestag* is 4 years.

The *Bundesrat* consists of delegates from each of the 11 *Länder* (States) constituting the Federation. At the present time, the total number of delegates is 45, including 4 delegates from West Berlin. The delegates must be members of the Government of the *Land* (State) that delegates them; it is the Government of the *Land* that appoints and recalls its delegates. The number of delegates from each *Land* depends on the size of its population: each *Land* having more than 6 million inhabitants may appoint 5 delegates; each *Land* having between 2 and 6 million inhabitants may appoint 4 delegates; each other *Land* may appoint 3 delegates. The votes of each *Land* may be cast only as a block vote.

Electoral System

Any citizen is entitled to vote provided he has attained the age of 18 years and has resided for at least three months in the country (although civil servants, members of the armed forces, employees and workmen in public service who are abroad pursuant to orders, as well as members of their households, also have the right to vote). Persons under guardianship and the insane may not vote.

Electoral registers are continually kept up to date and open for public inspection between the 20th and the 15th day preceding the elections. Voting is not compulsory. Any person entitled to vote but unable to do so at his place of residence may obtain a voter's certificate and may vote elsewhere or by correspondence.

Any qualified elector who has attained 18 years of age and has been a citizen for at least one year is eligible to become a Deputy.

Mutually incompatible are ministerial posts in a *Land* and membership of the *Bundestag*. A seat in Parliament, however, is not incompatible with membership of the Federal Government. Rights and duties of civil servants are suspended during their membership of the *Bundestag*.

Candidatures to the *Bundestag* may be for constituencies or for *Land* party lists.

Candidatures for constituencies may be presented by a political party or by individuals. In the latter case, or where the political party does not have at least five seats in the *Bundestag* or in the Parliament of a given *Land*, the candidature must be supported by at least 200 persons having the right to vote in the constituency concerned. For each constituency, each party may present only one candidate. Such candidate must have been chosen in a secret ballot in which members of the party who have the right to vote in the constituency, or their elected representatives, may participate.

A party which has not been continuously represented in the *Bundestag* or in the Parliament of a given *Land* by at least five members nominated by the party itself may only submit a nomination as a party if it has announced its intended participation in the election to the Federal Returning Officer not later than the 47th day before the election, and has been recognized as a party by the Federal Electoral Committee.

Candidatures for *Land* party lists may be presented by any political party, recognized as above. Where the party does not have at least five seats in the *Bundestag* or in the Parliament of a given *Land*, the list must be supported by the signature of one per thousand (but not more than 2,000) eligible voters in the *Land* concerned. The list must indicate the names of the candidates in order of preference. In each *Land*, each party may present only one list.

Each voter has two votes: one (the "first vote") for an individual candidate in one of the 248 constituencies, and one (the "second vote") for a party list established, for each of the 10 *Länder*, by each political party. Half of the 496 Deputies are elected from among the individual candidates (one in each of the 248 constituencies), and half of them on the basis of the party lists.

Among candidates from a given constituency, the candidate having received the highest number among the "first" votes becomes Deputy.

In each *Land*, every party is entitled to the number of seats that corresponds to its share in the "second" votes. The computation is made according to the d'Hondt system. The number of Deputies belonging to the party who were elected in the vote in the individual constituencies is subtracted from the total of the seats available to the party. The remaining number of seats go to the candidates indicated on the party list, in the order in which they were indicated. It is possible for a party, as happened in the 1983 elections in two cases, to have what are known as "surplus" seats when it wins more seats in the constituencies on the "first" vote than it is entitled to according to the result of the "second" vote calculation.

The party list of any party that has obtained less than 5% of all the "second" votes in the country is disregarded unless at least three candidates of that party have been elected in constituencies.

When the seat of a Deputy who was a member of a party which presented a party list becomes vacant, it is filled by the next candidate on that list, even when the Deputy had been elected in an individual constituency. If the seat of a Deputy who was not the member of a political party which presented a party list and who had been elected in an individual constituency becomes vacant, it is filled through a special election in that constituency. Such election must take place within 60 days from the date the seat becomes vacant.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On 17 September 1982, the governing coalition comprising the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) under Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD) was ended. On 1 October, a new coalition formed by the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the FDP moved a vote of no confidence in the previous Chancellor, at the same time electing Mr. Helmut Kohl (CDU) as his successor. Although, under West German constitutional law, new elections are not necessary in such a situation, all the parties represented in the *Bundestag* were, for a variety of reasons, in favour of elections at an early date. To arrive at this, Mr. Kohl moved a vote of confidence which he lost in a vote on 17 December, as a great majority of the CDU/CSU and FDP members abstained. Thereupon, the Chancellor proposed that the Federal President dissolve the *Bundestag*, which was effected on 6 March 1983.

Altogether, 13 parties and 2199 candidates were in the running for the *Bundestag* seats. Campaign issues focused principally on the country's general economic situation and on the subject of the proposed deployment of US-built missiles on German soil by NATO. The SPD, led by Mr. Hans-Jochen Vogel, took a more flexible stand on the latter question than the CDU, which generally favoured deployment. These two parties, as well as the FDP, contested all constituencies while the newly-founded Green Party - an environmentalist and anti-nuclear movement - fielded candidates in all but four.

On polling day, the CDU/CSU succeeded in picking up an additional 18 seats, while the SPD and FDP lost 26 and 19 seats, respectively. For the first time, the Greens were represented in the *Bundestag*, obtaining 28 seats. The CDU/CSU and FDP, with a combined total of 290 seats, renewed their coalition and on 29 March elected Mr. Kohl as Chancellor.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Bundestag

Number of registered electors.	44,088,935	
Voters.	39,279,529	(89.1%)
Blank or void "first votes".	434,176	
Valid "first votes".	38,845,353	
Blank or void "second votes".	338,842	
Valid "second votes".	38,940,687	

Political Group	"First votes" obtained	%	"Second votes" obtained		Number of Seats in 1983	Total Number of Seats won at Previous Elections (including Berlin)
Christian Democratic Union (CDU)	15,943,460	41.0	14,857,680	38.2	202	185
Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU).	4,318,800	11.1	4,140,865	10.6	53	52
Social Democratic Party (SPD).	15,686,033	40.4	14,865,807	38.2	202	228
Free Democratic Party (FDP).	1,087,918	2.8	2,706,942	7.0	35	54
Green Party (GRUNE)	1,609,855	4.1	2,167,431	5.6	28	—
German Communist Party (DKP).	96,143	0.2	64,986	0.2	—	—
National Democratic Party (NPD).	57,112	0.1	91,095	0.2	—	—
European Workers Party (EAP).	7,491	0.0	14,966	0.0	—	—
Oecological Democratic Party (ODP).	3,341	0.0	11,028	0.0	—	—
Christian Bavarian People's Party (CBV)	2,068	0.0	10,994	0.0	—	—
Independent Social Democrats (USD)	450	0.0	3,333	0.0	—	—
Union of West German Communists (BWK)	686	0.0	2,129	0.0	—	—
Communist Party of Germany (KPD)	—	—	3,431	0.0	—	—
Others.	31,996	0.1	—	—	520*	519

¹ One "surplus" seat was allotted in the 1983 elections.

2. *Distribution of Members of the Bundestag
according to professional Category*

Civil servants.	208
Employees of political and social organizations	65
Self-employed.	62
Liberal professions.	57
Employees in industry and commerce.	55
Members of the Government.	42
Workers.	14
Others.	<u>H</u>
	520

3. *Distribution of Members of the Bundestag
according to Sex*

Men.	469
Women.	51
	520

4. *Average Age of Members of the Bundestag: 48.2 years*