

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Date of Elections: 8 June 1986

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the German Democratic Republic, the *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber), is composed of 500 members directly elected for 5 years by universal suffrage.

Electoral System

Every citizen of the GDR who is at least 18 years old on election day and resides in the country has the right to vote and to be elected to the *Volkskammer*, unless he is under tutelage or has been deprived of his civil rights by court decision.

Electoral lists are established at least 21 days prior to the polling day and are publicly displayed for two weeks. Voting is not compulsory.

Candidates for the *Volkskammer* are nominated 30 to 40 days before election day by parties and mass organizations, which may present their proposals in a joint list of candidates of the National Front of the GDR. Voters may propose changes in the list(s) up to five days before the elections.

The 500 Deputies are elected in 73 constituencies, each choosing from four to 13 members, depending on its population. To be elected, a candidate must receive more than half of the valid votes cast in his constituency. If, within a constituency, an insufficient number of candidates obtain the required absolute majority needed to fill all the seats, a second ballot is held within 90 days. If the number of candidates winning this majority exceeds the number of seats in the respective constituency, the order of the candidates on the election list is decisive. Elected candidates who, on this basis, receive no seat become successor candidates who fill vacancies in the *Volkskammer* which occur during a legislative period.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The 1986 elections for the *Volkskammer* coincided with those for the country's 14 regional assemblies and for the Municipal Assembly of East Berlin, capital of the GDR.

Political parties and mass organizations - all belonging to the National Front of the German Democratic Republic - which participated in the poll were headed by the Socialist Unity Party (SED), formed in 1946. National Front candidates totalled 703. On polling day, 500 of these were elected, the remaining 203 becoming substitute Deputies.

At its first session on 16 June, the *Volkskammer* re-elected Mr. Willi Stoph as Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Mr. Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SED, was also re-elected Chairman of the Council of State (Head of State) on 16 June.

Statistics

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

| | | |
|---|------------|----------|
| Number of registered electors. | 12,434,444 | |
| Voters. | 12,402,013 | (99.74%) |
| Void ballot papers. | 2,407 | |
| Valid votes. | 12,399,606 | |
| <i>Votes in favour of the National Front of the GDR</i> | 12,392,094 | |

| Political Group | Number of Candidates | Number of Seats |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| National Front of the German Democratic Republic | 703 | 500 |

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category

| | |
|--|----------|
| Workers | 271 |
| Intellectuals | 126 |
| Salaried employees | 69 |
| Members of agricultural productive cooperatives, individual farmers, gardeners. | 31 |
| Others | <u>3</u> |
| | 500 |

3. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

| | |
|-------|------------|
| Men | 339 |
| Women | <u>161</u> |
| | 500 |

4. Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| 18-24 years | 26 |
| 25-30 » | 34 |
| 31-40 » | 60 |
| 41-50 » | 118 |
| 51-60 » | 181 |
| Over 60 years | <u>81</u> |
| | 500 |